

Divided Loyalties and Shifting Perceptions
The Jōkyū Disturbance and Courtier-Warrior Relations in Medieval Japan

Michael McCarty

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ABSTRACT

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The Kamakura period in Japan (1185-1333) was the first time that aristocratic rule in Kyoto was confronted by a competing warrior power in Kamakura, known as the Kamakura Bakufu. Historians in recent decades have cogently redefined this period as a transitional age between Japan's classical and medieval periods, but in their studies have restricted historical analysis to documentary evidence while rejecting the value of more belletristic texts. This dissertation engages critically with a wider range of source material, including texts often categorized as literature, to investigate cultural and social implications of the Kamakura-period that cannot be gleaned from documents. In particular, my study engages with the history of warrior and courtier relations seen in the lead-up, outbreak, and aftermath of a war known as the Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221.

In this event, the powerful retired emperor Go-Toba instigated a war against Hōjō Yoshitoki, the de facto leader of the newly emergent Kamakura Bakufu. Disastrously defeated within the span of a month, Go-Toba and his sons were all sent into exile by the Bakufu, which emerged from its victory more powerful than before. The shock waves Go-Toba's defeat sent through medieval society reveal the complexity of thirteenth-century Japan, characterized by divided loyalties, overlapping networks of interpersonal ties, and changing perceptions of social identity. By explaining, justifying, or condemning Go-Toba's actions in 1221, medieval writers explored new ways of understanding imperial authority, loyalty and honor, and the roles of court and warrior government, providing deeper insight into early medieval Japanese history.

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Introduction

As sudden as the Disturbance was, and since it lasted for barely a month, there is all the more danger of error in over-emphasizing the inevitability of its circumstances.

-Uwayokote Masataka, “Jōkyū no ran,” 1962.¹

The Jōkyū Disturbance

In the third year of Jōkyū, 1221, the powerful retired emperor Go-Toba (後鳥羽, 1180-1239) perceived cracks in the fragile compromise between the court and the Bakufu which he deemed to his advantage. Ever since the Genpei War brought about the formation of the warrior government known as the Kamakura Bakufu in 1185, warrior elites in Kamakura had fostered an uneasy alliance with partisans of the imperial court in Kyoto. Now Go-Toba circumvented any further cooperation between the two governments and began to act completely on his own. He mobilized his personal army, attacking a local Bakufu representative, and sent out a proclamation for warriors throughout Japan to help him defeat Hōjō Yoshitoki (北条義時, 1163-1224), the de-facto leader of the Bakufu. But Go-Toba’s plan backfired; most noble families ignored his call to arms, and the Bakufu chain of command mobilized quickly to defeat his fledgling army in a matter of weeks. Bakufu leaders exiled Go-Toba and his sons, installed rival imperial claimants to the throne, and emerged from their victory more powerful and unrestricted than ever before.

In the eyes of contemporary observers, the landscape of their government and society had irrevocably changed in the brief span of a month. Go-Toba’s failed campaign, known as the Jōkyū Disturbance (承久の乱), will be the focus of this study. But the story of this event has its genesis in a series of earlier conflicts in Japanese history—conflicts that gave rise to the dual system of government that would dominate the Kamakura period (1185-1333).

¹ In *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 5: p. 166.

Historical Background

Starting in the twelfth century, Japan was characterized by an increasingly chaotic political history, culminating in the famous Genpei War of 1180-1185. There had been several military campaigns throughout the Heian period (794-1185), but these had occurred in the peripheries of the Japanese state; the capital had always been spared, and each conflict remained regional.² The fact that violence now came to Kyoto, and then engulfed the entire country, would have a profound effect on the course of Japanese history. How things became so politically unstable in the twelfth century after the relatively peaceful Heian period thus needs some addressing, though is a tale that has been told many times in many different ways

The entire history of the classical Japanese state is basically one of long negotiation between a royal family that claimed semi-divine supremacy and other noble families, which often retained more practical political and economic cachet.³ From the beginning, unrest and outright rebellion periodically threatened the hegemony of the *tennō* (emperors, or “heavenly sovereigns”), occurring most often at succession disputes. Gradually, however, elites at the imperial court maneuvered, in fits and starts, into a system of stable co-rulership in which the strongest elite lineage (the northern Fujiwara) invested its energy in supporting the imperial line itself. In other words, political cooperation between aristocratic families and the imperial family became the most effective method of governance in the classical Japanese state. By supplying Fujiwara wives to reigning emperors, Fujiwara patriarchs acted as regents to their imperial progeny, ensuring that young future emperors would be loyal to them. In essence, the Fujiwara

² The most significant campaigns in the Heian period were Taira no Masakado’s rebellion in 939, the Former Nine Years’ War in the 1050s, and the Later Three Years’ War in the 1080s.

³ Cameron Hurst, *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan, 1086-1185*, pp. 34-35.

regents were ameliorating the conflict inherent in imperial succession by dividing the roles of power; the throne and the regency bolstered each other while remaining safely unattainable to the other party.⁴ This arrangement effectively banned conflict from the central imperial government for over two centuries—in fact, capital punishment was essentially outlawed for over three hundred years.⁵

Throughout the early to mid-Heian period, the Fujiwara found Japanese emperors more than willing participants in Fujiwara hegemony. At the same time, precedents of direct rule by a solitary emperor, most evident in Chinese models of statecraft, remained an alluring alternative.⁶ As Cameron Hurst has insightfully explored, the late eleventh century brought about a new era of conflict between the emperors and the Fujiwara courtiers centered on the mechanism of succession. The first emperor without a Fujiwara mother in centuries, Go-Sanjō (1034-73), broke the longstanding collaboration with that clan by abdicating in favor of a non-Fujiwara son, taking the role of succession arbiter into his own hands. Japanese scholars have termed this system of rule by abdicated sovereigns *insei* (院政, “cloistered government”). The contentiousness of this new breed of retired emperors exacerbated a political system in which many players already had a stake in matters such as imperial succession.

Succession under the *insei* system was a more complicated animal than before. For instead of being handled at the decisive, but non-violent, discretion of the most powerful Fujiwara courtier, succession became a contentious tool of the retired emperors. They would maintain their position of power by choosing which of their sons or grandsons was most

⁴ Peter Nickerson, “The Meaning of Matrilocality: Kinship, Property, and Politics in mid-Heian” in *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1993): pp. 450-51.

⁵ Beginning with an edict by emperor Daigo in the year 818, and ending with the Hōgen Disturbance of 1156. This edict was also deeply influenced by Buddhist doctrines against harming life.

⁶ See Paul Varley, *Imperial Restoration in Medieval Japan*, pp. 13-15 for discussion of some of the models of imperial rule Japanese intellectuals found in domestic examples as well.

amenable or malleable to their own goals, an inherently divisive action.⁷ Often this meant some time after his abdication the retired emperor would force an older son to abdicate as well—making him a “junior” retired emperor—to place a much younger and more impressionable son or grandson on the throne. An older son who had his own ideas of ruling was inherently a threat to the senior retired emperor. Conversely, a marginalized junior retired emperor would see his only chance for power lie in *his* own progeny taking the throne, and thus he would take considerable risks to fight for *his* son’s accession rather than that of another son of the senior retired emperor. If it all sounds too complicated, that is because it was. With multiple retired emperors scheming and entire court factions hitching their success on one possible heir, succession disputes became dangerous. In hindsight, it is safe to say that the convoluted actions of these abdicated emperors were directly responsible for the violence of the twelfth century.⁸

The spark that lit the powder keg was a succession dispute in the mid-twelfth century. One resentful junior retired emperor, Sutoku, was particularly marginalized by his father, the senior retired emperor Toba. Just before his death in 1156 Toba had maneuvered onto the throne his younger son Go-Shirakawa (後白河, 1127-1192), once more trampling Sutoku’s plans for his own son’s succession. With his father gone Sutoku now proceeded to contest Go-Shirakawa’s recent accession.⁹ In a fateful decision, Sutoku hitched his plans to an alliance with a warrior leader named Minamoto Tameyoshi, effectively militarizing the dispute. This so-called Hōgen Disturbance (保元の乱), named for the era in which it occurred, fractured the imperial family, the Fujiwara regency, and both Taira and Minamoto warrior families into pro-Sutoku and pro-

⁷ As Hurst also points out, this choice often reflected the retired emperor’s most favored wife, as with Nijō.

⁸ Though I stop short of the theory by Kōichi Shōsuke that the court-Bakufu system of dual rule was a direct product of the resurgence of the *insei* emperors. See *Nihon chūsei no chōtei, bakufu taisei*, (2007): part I.

⁹ Sutoku had been made to abdicate for Toba’s son Konoe, and with Konoe’s early death in 1155 Sutoku apparently believed his son Shigehito would be next in line.

Go-Shirakawa camps. The pro-Go-Shirakawa faction, led by the combined forces of Taira Kiyomori and Minamoto Yoshitomo (Tameyoshi's son), staged a daring night attack on Sutoku's Toba palace (鳥羽田中殿), burning it to the ground. Sutoku and his supporters were exiled, and many of the higher-ranking warriors in Sutoku's faction were executed, including Tameyoshi.

If we investigate the composition of the Hōgen factions, we come across what initially appears to be an odd coincidence: fathers and their eldest sons ended up on opposing sides in *every* elite family involved in the dispute. The type of conflict we saw between Toba and Sutoku was not limited to the imperial house: the Fujiwara and the warrior clans were splitting along similar fault lines. In essence, the heads of each lineage had been designating younger sons as heirs to supplant or neutralize their more powerful oldest sons, thus engendering great resentment.¹⁰ As Ishii Susumu succinctly explains, this caused tension because in all elite lineages there was in fact an increasing trend toward primogeniture, with oldest sons expecting to be handed the reins of the family and ready to fight against their fathers or younger brothers to secure those rights.¹¹

Why do the particulars of this Hōgen Disturbance so occupy our focus? On one hand, the Hōgen Disturbance was a turning point in Japanese history. While these mid-twelfth-century actors were building on hierarchical clientele relationships inherited from the early Heian period, they were now aligning them into opposing, multi-tiered power blocs focused on all-or-nothing political gains. Once these power blocs were militarized in the Hōgen conflict, the Japanese

¹⁰ In the imperial family, the basic conflict began with Toba choosing his younger son Go-Shirakawa for accession instead of a son of Sutoku, who was Toba's eldest. In the Fujiwara regency, Fujiwara Tadazane, who joined Sutoku, chose Yorinaga for favor over his eldest Tadamichi; Yorinaga joined Sutoku's faction and Tadamichi joined Go-Shirakawa. In the Minamoto family, Tameyoshi joined Sutoku along with his younger sons, including Tametomo and Yoshikata, shutting out his eldest Yoshitomo, who joined Go-Shirakawa. The situation on the Taira side was more complicated: the split came between Taira Tadamori's eldest son Kiyomori, and his younger brother Tadamasa, so an uncle/nephew rivalry.

¹¹ See *Nihon tsūshi*, vol. 7, p. 34.

political system became much more vulnerable to military interference than before, setting the stage for independent warrior power. But more broadly, the Hōgen Disturbance can give us a sense of the more enduring features of pre-modern Japanese politics. The most important point is that in ancient Japan, division within families was not unusual, but rather the norm. Since elite men had multiple wives, fathers could not favor a particular wife without also favoring her sons to the exclusion of the others. So conflict between father and son always translated into conflict between brothers, since all brothers were potential heirs and thus of competition to each other.¹² This context of family rivalries will be important for chapters two and three—for whenever a larger-scale rebellion, war, or succession dispute fractured pre-modern Japan's political landscape, every family from the emperor's down to those of regional warriors could split to take sides. The conflict would represent to some a golden chance to wrest inheritance from designated heirs, and to others a dangerous threat to their interests. These collateral family conflicts were so bitter and vicious because disenfranchised sons had everything to gain and nothing to lose—except their lives!—by challenging their brothers.¹³

After the Hōgen Disturbance—and the Heiji Disturbance of 1159, which was essentially a falling out between the victors of Hōgen—the new retired emperor Go-Shirakawa emerged as the dominant figure at court and his partner, Taira Kiyomori (平清盛, 1118-1181), the dominant military leader. The alliance between Kiyomori and Go-Shirakawa was a continuation of decades of clientele relationships between the two families.¹⁴ However, Kiyomori soon alienated his patron and other allies at court by acting with heavy-handed authority and wresting positions and

¹² Though it is important to note that since sons were raised by their mother's families, they did share loyalty to their full siblings and would generally look after each other's interests. When sibling rivalry happened, it occurred without fail between half-brothers, who had *different* mothers.

¹³ See *DKR*, pp. 20-25 for the familial element in 1221.

¹⁴ Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding* pp. 14-21.

perks from the court aristocracy for his supporters. After a few abortive attempts by court figures to dislodge Kiyomori's hold on the capital, Minamoto no Yoritomo (源頼朝, 1147-1199)—an exiled son of Kiyomori's defeated rival Yoshitomo—saw the tide of resentment was swelling against the Taira, and began to mobilize new alliances in the east.

Yoritomo was surely a visionary in many ways, but his greatest asset in the 1180s was fortunate timing—by waiting to make his move he benefitted from the mistakes of the Taira and the successes of Minamoto relatives acting in his name.¹⁵ The Taira-controlled court labeled Yoritomo an outlaw in 1180, but Yoritomo boldly kept dispatching his relatives Yoshinaka and Yoshitsune to attack the Taira in stunning battles, meanwhile making respectful overtures to the court. By the time the weakened Taira fled the capital for their stronger base in the western provinces, people in Kyoto had suffered enough violence and instability that Yoritomo's promises to keep the peace became all the more attractive. After finally defeating the Taira in 1185, and thus bringing an end to the Genpei War, Yoritomo proceeded to eliminate all remaining threats to his authority—both external and intra-familial—and set up a network of supporters to regulate his now unwieldy cohort of vassals. Unlike Kiyomori, Yoritomo made Kamakura, not Kyoto, the headquarters of his new network of governors and stewards (*shugo* and *jitō*). Historians call the government Yoritomo created the Kamakura Bakufu (鎌倉幕府).¹⁶

By asserting his prerogative to appoint military officers throughout the eastern provinces, Yoritomo was signaling his relative independence from the influence of the imperial court. The move was unprecedented, and the starting point of approximately seven centuries in which military men would assert political control in Japan. But though it is clear that Yoritomo's

¹⁵ The best overview of Yoritomo's rise in recent scholarship can be found in Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding*, chapter 3, which informs this summary.

¹⁶ The term "bakufu" originally meant "tent government," and was used to refer to the temporary nature of military outposts. However, Yoritomo's system was a departure by being permanently based in the small town of Kamakura, southwest of present-day Tokyo.

new warrior government was a watershed in Japanese history, the exact scope of this achievement and its implications have been a matter of considerable debate in the past few decades, producing varying interpretations. Was Yoritomo initiating an age of warrior-dominated feudalism, where control over land became the only standard of power? Did his victory represent the defeat of the aristocratic class at the hands of the warrior class—making Yoritomo the ruler of all Japan? How much power and influence did the imperial court retain after the foundation of the Bakufu? The answers to these questions have been changing in the past few decades, providing new departures for historians interested in the early Kamakura period. This study will re-evaluate the significance of the early Kamakura world that Yoritomo created, and the ways in which the Jōkyū Disturbance disrupted and irrevocably changed it.

Why the Jōkyū Disturbance?

How to refer to this event in English first needs to be addressed. The most common phrase for Go-Toba's campaign in Japanese is “Jōkyū no ran” (承久の乱)—or “the disorder/disturbance of Jōkyū.” This is not a locative phrase, like the Battle of Waterloo or the Battle of Sekigahara. It is no more or less descriptive than saying “the disorder that happened in the Jōkyū years”—merely indicating the short era name under which the event occurred. In this case, Jōkyū was the era that ran from 1219 to 1221.¹⁷ Despite the wide range of terms that can be used to translate *Jōkyū no ran*, I will use the nomenclature “The Jōkyū Disturbance,” which maintains fidelity to how this event was first understood in the pre-modern Japanese context

¹⁷ Or more precisely, from the 12th day of the fourth month of 1219 to the 13th day of the fourth month of 1222 in the traditional Japanese lunisolar calendar. See the notes at the end of this introduction for a discussion of the difference between the Japanese and western calendars.

while avoiding the political implications of “rebellion.”¹⁸ Also, the term “disturbance” is just as middling and as ambiguous as the event itself. Neither as grand as a war, as revolutionary as a rebellion, nor as abrupt as an incident, a disturbance implies a brief but intense disruption of the status quo. After Go-Toba’s defeat, the Bakufu was at pains to reinstate the organs of court power as meticulously and completely as it could. Sources at the time express a kind of confused frustration about how upsetting the events of 1221 were, but also how quickly they were arbitrated and almost eradicated from official public memory.

Calling this event the Jōkyū Disturbance also has additional resonances for my study. Analysis of the sources reveal the broader ways in which Jōkyū was a fracture, a moment of rupture that revealed competing ideologies, division within families, and a wide range of frustrated responses to Go-Toba’s ill-fated campaign. Indeed, the Jōkyū “Disturbance” merits its title in terms of cultural and social history as well, and not just in the more limited meaning of political intrigue. The waters of Japan’s political system had been disturbed quickly and violently by the events of 1221, and the surface returned to deceptive stasis just as quickly. But the ripples of Go-Toba’s defeat went through Japanese society on a much deeper level as Go-Toba’s actions rankled all from the highest aristocrats to middling warrior mercenaries.

A study of the Jōkyū Disturbance provides a number of benefits for scholars of pre-modern Japan. First of all, Jōkyū proved to be a significant moment in the relationship between courtiers and warriors. Unlike much scholarship on Japan which paints an oppositional relationship between these two groups starting as early as Kiyomori’s rise to power, the early Kamakura period saw a level of considerable cooperation and interdependency between courtier and warrior elites. The sources centered on the Jōkyū Disturbance express relatively positive

¹⁸ Though Jien referred to these events by the term “rebellious disturbance” (乱逆) in a letter of 5/18/1221, three days after Go-Toba’s edict of war, *Jien Zenshu*, p. 889. The term “Jōkyū no ran” seems to have first appeared in the literature in the table of contents for *Baishōron*, which titles it “the affair of the Jōkyū disturbance” (承久ノ乱ノ事).

assessments between the two groups and a sense that the governing arrangement between Kyoto and Kamakura was mutually beneficial, especially before 1221. As we move closer to the fourteenth century, increasing hostility and disappointment mark the writings of later generations, and perceptions of warriors and courtiers become more complicated and polarized. These later images of effete, downcast courtiers and brave, violent warriors—enshrined in texts like *Heike Monogatari*—have dominated our understanding of medieval society, which makes the more pragmatic and peaceful relationship of the pre-Jōkyū age all the more fascinating and necessary to historical discourse.

But within this larger trajectory, a study of the Jōkyū Disturbance also allows us to recapture the reactions to moments of crisis and tragedy that transcend time and place. As will be demonstrated especially in chapters three and four, the war provoked by Go-Toba provided an opportunity for many people to act on long-standing tensions or to chase after successes that had eluded them before. But like in the earlier Hōgen Disturbance, these tensions were most evident *within* familial and social groups, and not *between* more cohesive polarities. For a brief moment, defection and betrayal proliferated, and even vaunted values like honor and loyalty had little currency. Even the divine emperor became subject to intense scrutiny and antipathy as the shock of his defeat rippled through society. Scholars who analyze the contradictions of imperial mythology of the modern period may be surprised to see some of the same problems and responses to the thirteenth-century emperors in the writings after 1221. More than that, all of the varied range of human responses to tragedy that characterize our own experience of misfortune are present in the different thirteenth-century texts, opening a fascinating window into the different ways human beings make sense of senseless loss.

Finally, the wealth and variety of writings out of the Jōkyū Disturbance confront both historians and literary scholars with the inadequacy of our current disciplinary boundaries and

the way we categorize written material from the past. Rather than bifurcate writings into “literary” and “historical” sources, my study attempts to analyze all sources—ranging from mostly functional documents to works of highly embellished artistry—to gain insight into the multiplicity of voices that characterize the early medieval period. In order to explore the full significance of the Jōkyū Disturbance, we need to widen our gaze to include sources that many historians have rejected for their literary-ness. Only the full range of written material, from land documents and letters to diaries, chronicles, narratives, and tales, can provide a picture of this time that shows the true complexity of the thirteenth century. In order to integrate this great variety of sources, however, we need to be attentive to issues of historicity—such as dating, content, provenance, and philology—as well as matters of trope, characterization, style, and linguistics.

The Jōkyū Disturbance is the perfect opportunity to draw from such a wide range of texts—not only because of their variety but for their novelty. Unlike the Genpei War, which has been a popular topic of popular history and cultural production ever since it happened, the Jōkyū Disturbance has captured less imagination and warranted fewer scholarly studies. This lack of coverage is actually a great benefit on two counts. For one, it means that even at the time of the Disturbance and its early aftermath, the writers who did engage with the events of 1221 were motivated less by the kind of literary imagination that fueled the popular performance genres of Genpei literature. To be sure, Jōkyū commentators used a variety of literary tropes and fictive elements in their works, but despite the various positionalities of these texts, they were all tied more closely to what we might call historical agendas: to understand, explain or argue about the events of the Disturbance themselves. The second benefit relates to the position of Jōkyū at the margins of Japanese literary and historical topics. Because Jōkyū has suffered scholarly gaze less, its details and source base can provide a fresh perspective on early medieval Japan. The fact that

many of the sources I introduce in the dissertation have never been translated or studied in English bespeaks especially the benefits of a comprehensive investigation of the Jōkyū Disturbance in the English-language field.

From these sources of the Jōkyū Disturbance we can draw out the full complexity of the early thirteenth century and step into a confusing and at times contradictory web of relationships and incidents: a government of warriors that had great appeal among courtiers; a charismatic and forceful ruler whom very few supported; a sweeping and well-conceived plan of war that failed within weeks; a new “retired emperor” who had never reigned; a massive army of hundreds of thousands worried that they were a “small force;” a divine sovereign brought to judgment as a fallible human. The Jōkyū Disturbance was a fracture that opened up new possibilities, but it also closed doors that had been left open since 1185, as a cooperative world turned antagonistic. Using the Jōkyū Disturbance as a lens on the early medieval world exposes the primacy of interpersonal relationships and social bonds, the haphazard motives behind drastic choices, nostalgia for the past and anxiety and hope about the future. It shows how storytelling, perhaps the oldest of human pursuits, could be used in radically different ways to justify, rationalize, or denounce the past, or achieve closure with troubling and tragic events. And it also exposes changes in how groups in Japan saw themselves and each other as their social realities and collective memories of the past underwent new transformations.

The Structure of this Study

My study will accomplish these goals by investigating the Jōkyū Disturbance in five episodic chapters. Superficially these chapters seem to work quite well in terms of chronology: after the initial methodology chapter, the remaining four could be classified as Japan pre-Jōkyū, the Jōkyū event, its immediate aftermath, and post-Jōkyū Japan. However it would be wrong for

the reader to expect from this classification a completely linear story. Each chapter more accurately is concerned with, and structured around, a problem or series of questions that override in importance any concerns of chronology.

The first chapter, “A New Approach to Pre-Modern Japanese Texts,” may be explained as the *raison d’être* of the dissertation. After surveying the wide range of sources available for the study of pre-modern Japan, I evaluate scholarly approaches to these sources and how they have changed in recent decades. I first illustrate the traditional approach of the English-language field of pre-modern Japanese studies until the 1970s, in which war tales and other works of literature were used as reliable pictures of medieval history. Then I evaluate the shift toward more rigorous study of primary documents spearheaded by Jeffrey Mass and the changing interpretations of medieval Japan his work created. The point of departure for my study, then, is to look at a wide range of sources—including some of the texts Mass and his students have held in suspicion—which I introduce in section II. The final section of the chapter is devoted to an illustration of my method of analysis by comparing different textual versions of a famous speech Hōjō Masako made to rally the Bakufu troops in 1221. My hope is that the close analysis of Masako’s speech in this chapter will sufficiently demonstrate the benefits of a more rigorous historical approach that is still inclusive of different types of sources.

The second chapter, “Japan on the Eve of the Jōkyū Disturbance,” scrutinizes the sources for insights into Japan before 1221. Because most of the Jōkyū texts were written by people that had personally experienced the decades leading up to the 1221, their picture of early “interwar” Kamakura Japan is extremely useful—especially since the authors often intentional contrast the interwar period to their post-Jōkyū present. This chapter explores early Kamakura Japan through four lenses: the legacy of the first Shogun Minamoto no Yoritomo; internal conflict in the imperial court; internal conflict within the Bakufu; and the desire for peace and cooperation that

pervaded Japan after the Genpei War. A major concern in all of these sections is how the relationship between the Kamakura Bakufu and the Imperial court was seen by observers from both sides. I argue that most people in the early thirteenth century believed the Bakufu, even after Yoritomo's death, was a positive and stabilizing force in Japanese society. In other words, though courtier and warrior government fulfilled separate roles, each was seen as dependent on each other. This idea of interdependency and the strong desire for peace after the twelfth-century struggles explains why Go-Toba's instigation of war was so shocking to people at the time.

The third chapter, "How Did the Jōkyū Disturbance Happen?" investigates how the event occurred. The first section places Go-Toba's rule in the context of *insei* politics discussed above and takes a closer look at sources that provide anecdotes relating to Go-Toba's war recruitment. Tales of warriors that defected (or did *not* defect) from the Bakufu to Go-Toba illustrate the complexity of interpersonal ties and the unchanging importance of marriage politics in the Kamakura period. The second and third sections offer a critical reading of the narratives of battle in the Jōkyū Disturbance. I argue that despite narrative tropes of overwhelming Bakufu force, the war was fought with much more limited forces made up of semi-autonomous regiments. In all of these sections what becomes evident is the fractured nature of authority in early medieval Japan, where people on all sides exercised loyalty based on personal, lived experiences and not abstract ideals such as honor. The complex and multitudinous responses to Go-Toba's war before and after its outbreak confirm that we should see the Jōkyū Disturbance as a private war by the retired emperor, and not a cultural clash between courtiers and warriors.

The fourth chapter, "Shock Waves," investigates the varied responses by observers toward Go-Toba's disastrous defeat. The outrage expressed in many sources illustrates the universality of the human struggle to understand tragedy, even though writers turned to concepts within the unique and complex world of religious and political ideology available to them in

early medieval Japan. But I demonstrate that the honesty and vitriol of some of these responses also show an uncanny ability for pre-modern critics to evaluate, and criticize, Go-Toba in surprisingly human terms. These pre-modern examples of emperor-criticism have powerful implications for studies of the deification of the emperor in modern Japan. In the second half I investigate three narratives that contain versions of a debate between two Bakufu leaders. These debates about the propriety of waging war against the emperor are another site where medieval thinkers tried to rationalize the Jōkyū Disturbance, and over time many of the unsettling implications of the Bakufu's victory became mitigated through sophisticated arguments and characterization.

In the final chapter, "Changing Perceptions of Warriors and Courtiers," I use the sources documenting the Jōkyū Disturbance as an archive of representations of courtiers and warriors in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Because the Jōkyū texts are less inventive than other medieval tales, comparison between different accounts of the same story or same character can show more obvious changes in cultural perceptions over time. Through analysis of terminology and textual differences in the sources, I demonstrate the changing nature of courtier and warrior cultural representation. Unlike early texts that show very little awareness of courtiers as a meaningfully defined identity, later texts betray preoccupation with courtier values and the decline of court prestige. And though "warrior" (*bushi*) was already a marked category, the characteristics of warrior identity also became more solidified over time as self-interest and other problematic aspects of warrior life were gradually eroded from discourse. The increasingly solidified perceptions of courtiers and warriors in the fourteenth century are the source of many of the myths of medieval culture that have obscured the complexity and diversity of the early medieval period.

Supplementary Material and Notes

Work on this project led to a full translation of one of the most valuable Jōkyū narratives, *Rokudai Shōjiki* (“Record of Surprising Events in Six Reigns”). Since this will be the first study of the text in English, my annotated translation has been added as an appendix to provide context for the liberal use I make of this text throughout the dissertation.

A brief note on conventions and abbreviations is required. Representation of traditional Japanese dates is always a complicated issue. For the benefit of the reader dated entries from primary texts, such as diaries, have been simplified to the form yyyy/mm/dd, where “year” is the western (Gregorian) year that most closely corresponds to the given year in the Japanese lunisolar calendar. For example, the date of the “Great Shuffle” mentioned in chapter two—the 25th day of the 11th month of the seventh year of Kenkyū—would be expressed here as 1196/11/25. This *does not*, however, equal November 25th, 1196; this date in the Japanese calendar actually corresponds to December 23, 1196 in our modern reckoning based on the Gregorian calendar.¹⁹ Thus it is important to remember that traditional Japanese years do not overlap onto western years exactly. Some dates near the end of the Japanese lunisolar year would actually have occurred in the subsequent Gregorian year. I also use a lowercase “i” to represent an intercalary month; so the date of Hōjō Tokimasa’s failed revolt against the Bakufu and his taking the tonsure (the 19th day of the intercalary 7th month of Genkyū 2) would be rendered: 1205/i.7/19.

The following abbreviations are used routinely in the notes, and also occasionally in the main text if the full name of the work or series has already been introduced:

¹⁹ *Nihon inyō seibi taishōhyō*, vol. 2, p. 193. Though it is important to remember that the Julian calendar was being used in Europe at the time, so this date would correspond to December 16, 1196 in contemporary sources in European history.

AK=*Azuma Kagami*

JKK=*Jōkyūki*

RS=*Rokudai Shōjiki*

DKR=Jeffrey Mass, *The Development of Kamakura Rule*.

KSTK=*Kokushi taikei*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan series.

NKBT=*Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, Iwanami Shoten series.

SNKBT=*Shinpen nihon koten bungaku taikei*, Iwanami Shoten series.

SNKBZ=*Shinpen nihon koten bugaku zenshu*, Shogakkan series.

DNSR=*Dai nihon shiryō*, Tokyo University documents collection.

KI=*Kamakura ibun*, Takeuchi Rizō edited documents collection.

Chapter 1 – A New Approach to Pre-Modern Japanese Texts

Let us be suspicious of the words of the past.¹

-Lucian Febvre

I. The Problem of Sources

A World of Sources

Researchers interested in medieval Japan are fortunate to have at their disposal a great variety of primary sources. The extant primary texts from the medieval period exhibit a wide range of features, on a spectrum from what we might call functional documentation to more aesthetic and imaginative content. As we will see, there has been great variation in how scholars have approached these sources and how they have been used in historical inquiry, but the sheer diversity of these sources merits recognition. For each of these categories of texts below I have included their most often used Japanese term.

Documents (*ibun* 遺文, *komonjo* 古文書) like letters, bills of sale, government orders and communiqués, wills, lawsuits, and business records proliferate in the late Heian and medieval periods, giving valuable insight into the daily workings of families and institutions. Diaries, most notably court diaries written in *kanbun* orthography (*kanbun nikki* 漢文日記, *kokiroku* 古記録), reveal day-to-day concerns of top government officials and the decisions made in the upper echelons of the court bureaucracy. Examples of more belletristic and composed texts abound as well, and Japanese scholarship has given us useful, if occasionally over-determined, genres to make sense of this diversity. For example, so-called historical tales (*rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語) were often written to summarize the political and cultural

¹ *The Problem of Unbelief*, p. 146.

achievements at court over a certain period; war tales (*gunki monogatari* 軍記物語) lauded the bravery of men in great battles and wars; more polemical works of historical argumentation (*shiron* 史論) included explanation and interpretation along with the events they recounted. But beyond these examples of what could be generalized as narrative literature, anecdotal tales (*setsuwa* 説話), religious scriptures, poetry, and many other texts survive. And perhaps most difficult to categorize, chronicles (*nendaiki* 年代記) would be compiled and edited into chronological order using any or all of the above as source material. For example, the most famous chronicle from the Kamakura period, the *Azuma Kagami* (“Mirror of the East”), has been demonstrated have drawn its sources from documents, house records, diaries, and literary narratives of the period.

Though these varied and interesting sources are a great boon to historians, how to interpret them has been no easy matter. Scholarly approaches to these sources have been changing over the course of the last century, affecting not only which sources historians consider most appropriate for research, but also the kinds of interpretations and conclusions drawn from them. Let us now look at the state of the field for pre-modern Japanese history with an eye toward the way historians, especially in the West, have used and interpreted primary sources in their scholarly works.

Scholarship to the 1970s

Ever since the opening of Japan to the West in the nineteenth century, western scholars have struggled to make pre-modern Japanese history accessible and understandable to foreign readers. Though there were many advances in English-language studies on Japan in each generation, we can say—with some small injustice—that scholarship from the late nineteenth century to around the mid-1970s was marked by overall continuity in terms of interpretation and

source base. From the start both amateur and professional scholars like Basil Chamberlain, George Sansom and James Murdoch exhibited striking proficiency in modern and classical forms of the Japanese language, translating classic works of literature into English and providing sweeping surveys of Japanese history. These early works on pre-modern Japan were instructive, readable, and full of highly personal and explanatory insights from their authors, and they reflected synthesis of a great deal of writing by contemporary Japanese scholars and a broad reading of primary texts.

The corpus of texts chosen for reading and interpretation, however, tended to be restricted to the more aesthetic side of the scale: war tales like *Heike Monogatari* (“Tale of the Heike”) and *Taiheiki* (“The Great Peace”), historical tales like *Masukagami* (“The Clear Mirror”), and occasional reference to works of historical argumentation, including Jien’s *Gukanshō* (“Foolish and Narrow Notes”) and Kitabatake Chikafusa’s *Jinnō Shōtōki* (“Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns”). Along with these narrative texts, chronicles like *Azuma Kagami* were also important sources for historians. Out of all of these, however, it was the dramatic and sweeping war tales that most influenced historians looking to comprehend medieval Japan. These texts had powerfully drawn heroes and villains, they dealt with the most famous and dramatic political events of the medieval age, and they provided ready-made commentary on the significance of the events that they depicted. These tales also provided tropes of behavior, characterization, and ethical dilemmas that, to western scholars, seemed like a window into “traditional” and authentically Japanese cultural values.

Dovetailing with similar interpretations they found in Marxist-influenced Japanese scholarship, western scholars thus read these rich works of literature as reliable pictures of late-Heian and early-medieval society. Drawing from *Heike Monogatari* and the *Taiheiki*, scholars through the early postwar period saw a medieval age of warrior dominance,

characterized by martial values like loyalty, bravery, and honor. With the rise of the Taira and Minamoto warrior clans and the founding of the Kamakura Bakafu, scholars saw an inexorable shift to samurai power. Conversely they saw the imperial court in Kyoto as a sad holdover of bygone days, with powerless aristocrats commiserating about their loss of prestige after the rise of the samurai. Marxist overtones of class conflict, though not explicit, remained in the background of this narrative of warrior ascendancy: the Taira and Minamoto struggles for dominance represented the rise of an entire class of warriors who took control over land in the provinces.² In fact, the shift in Japan from a “classical” age to this medieval period on the late twelfth centuries had supposedly ushered in an age of feudalism comparable to that in medieval Europe, in which power was decentralized and authority was based on military ties of vassalage.³ Much was made of the fact that Japan was the only country to have experienced feudalism outside of Europe, and further, the proliferation of martial values depicted in tales like *Heike Monogatari* confirmed for western scholars that the Heian-Kamakura shift was cultural as well as socioeconomic.

Certainly innovations and deeper studies, both in Japanese and in English, continued to improve understanding of medieval Japan throughout the postwar period.⁴ Rumblings of a different approach to sources and their interpretation could also be felt in the late 1960s with John W. Hall’s document-based historical method (most notably in his monograph *Government*

² Western scholars were deriving these implications from Japanese scholarship, which was more unreservedly Marxist. Ishimoda Shō in particular advanced these ideas in the early postwar period, interpreting the Heian-Kamakura shift in terms of a transition from ancient slavery to feudal serfdom. Though John Hall points out that there were other approaches to this question and debates among Japanese scholars over the precise period where Japan became “feudal,” see *Court and Bakufu*, pp. 273-75.

³ See Edwin Reischauer’s survey *Japan: The Story of a Nation*, chapter 4, for a classic example of this view.

⁴ For example, in John Brownlee’s “The Shōkyū War and the Political Rise of the Warriors” (1975), he qualifies some traditional theories by painting the Hōjō as more restrained administrators than arrogant upstarts and impressively notes that true “bushido” (*way of the warrior*) did not date back to the Kamakura period, pp. 67-69. Yet he nevertheless perpetuates many of the older myths about warriors, including their “absolute loyalty” to their lords.

and *Local Power in Japan* published 1966) and Kenneth Butler's more philological approach to literary texts in several journal articles.⁵ These scholars expressed some dissatisfaction with the state of the field and pointed to more careful and rigorous attention to primary sources and their dating.⁶ But overall, Anglophone scholarship on pre-modern Japan remained essentially unchanged in outlook, interpretation, and method until the mid-1970s. The medieval period, broadly defined, continued to be understood as a shift from central aristocracy to military-dominated feudalism, with warrior leader Minamoto Yoritomo at the helm of this cultural and social sea change.

The New Approach

Though John Hall's institutional approach did not fit in with other scholarship of the 1960s and early 70s, it was extremely influential on a student of his named Jeffrey Mass. Mass (1940-2001) was unquestionably the person most responsible for shifting Japanese pre-modern history into a more rigorous discipline of close primary source analysis. He revolutionized the field of pre-modern Japanese history by focusing directly on documents, transferring the object of inquiry from narrative tales of "great men" to the real mechanisms of Japanese political and economic institutions.⁷ Throughout a series of monographs on Kamakura history, Mass researched and translated many documents never before used in western scholarship to show the practical day-to-day work in which the Kamakura Bakufu was engaged, looking at everything

⁵ Including "The Textual Evolution of the Heike Monogatari," (1966) and "The *Heike Monogatari* and the Japanese Warrior Ethic," (1969), both in *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.

⁶ It is also a signal of Hall's forward-thinking attitude that he criticized the use of the term feudalism in the Japanese case more broadly, in the collection of essays *Early Modern Japan*, "Feudalism Reconsidered," in 1968.

⁷ See Cameron Hurst's personal comments on Mass' work in the introduction to *Currents in Medieval Japanese History* (hereafter *Currents*), pp. 1-4; also Joan Piggott's overview of his research in the same volume, "Navigating Kamakura History," especially pp. 404-405.

from shogunal orders to records of lawsuits, landholdings, and Bakufu measures against unruly vassals.⁸ All of this research convinced him that the view of Kamakura Japan inherited from tales like *Heike Monogatari* was misleading. As the title of one of his monographs shows, he believed “antiquity and anachronism” had skewed historiography on medieval Japan. In short, scholars had uncritically adopted the views of later actors and writers who retroactively projected the achievements of their ages back to Yoritomo, exaggerating the success and power of the first Bakufu. In particular, Mass saw that these problematic interpretations were stemming from taking embellished literary texts at face value, instead of looking at more reliable documents.⁹

Though he passed away relatively young at the age of 60, Mass was able to accomplish numerous volumes of groundbreaking research on Japan. One of Mass’ monographs, *The Development of Kamakura Rule*, remains the only rigorous study of the Jōkyū Disturbance in English, and one to which I am deeply indebted. Throughout his long tenure at Stanford University he trained multiple generations of graduate students who now dominate the field of pre-modern Japanese history in North America and continue his legacy of document-driven research. Mass’ restless commitment to historical inquiry can be seen in how he decided to rewrite his first book on Japan once his later research—and that of his students—had uncovered new evidence making his initial premises outdated.¹⁰ In the first book, Mass had operated from older assumptions that Yoritomo’s achievement signified the rise of military power and the

⁸ See especially *Kamakura Japan: A Study in Documents* (1976). For an interesting view of how this sea change was noted at the time, see Carl Steenstrup’s review of Mass’ *The Development of Kamakura Rule* in *Monumenta Nipponica*, tellingly titled: “Pushing the Papers of Kamakura. The Nitty-Grittcists Versus the Grand Sweepers.” Nitty-gritticist, of course, refers to Mass.

⁹ *The Kamakura Bakufu*, pp. 6-9.

¹⁰ He rewrote his first book, *Warrior Government in Early Medieval Japan* (1974) as *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan* (1999), hereafter *Yoritomo and the Founding*. See Piggott, “Navigating Kamakura History” in *Currents*, especially pp. 412-21.

decline of court control throughout Japan.¹¹ In his reconfigured version, he saw instead a “more modest achievement by Yoritomo” and a regime in Kamakura that was considerably more restrained, geographically restricted, and elite than earlier scholarship had suggested.¹²

Mass and his colleague’s document-driven research have had broader implications for historiography and periodization in Japanese history as well. In a departure from pre-1970s scholarship, Mass and his cohort have suggested that the defining characteristics of medieval Japan (warrior dominance, decentralized and local government, the loss of court prestige, and decreasing role of women) did not really emerge properly until the fourteenth century. This new theory of periodization was made clear in a landmark collection of essays Mass edited called “The Origins of Japan’s Medieval World.”¹³ According to this new theory, the Kamakura period represents not the beginning of the medieval age, but the last gasp of the classical *ritsuryō* (律令) order.¹⁴ To many Anglophone scholars today, the Kamakura Bakufu is therefore seen as a regime that propped up the imperial court bureaucracy, not a military government that overrode and militarized all of Japan. Whether to call the Kamakura period “medieval” in the first place is now somewhat controversial.¹⁵ Whether the Kamakura period should be seen as the tail end of the

¹¹ He says that the foundation of the Bakufu represented a “shift in the center of gravity” from the court to the military class. See *Warrior Government in Early Medieval Japan*, pp. ix, 2, and 56.

¹² *Yoritomo and the Founding*, p. xi.

¹³ See Mass’ introduction to that volume, and Joan Piggot’s overview in “Navigating Kamakura History,” *Currents* pp. 10-11 and 420.

¹⁴ See Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding*, e.g. p. 255 on Yoritomo “resuscitating” the Heian order.

¹⁵ However, in the collection of essays commemorating Mass’ legacy, *Currents in Medieval Japanese History*, the authors still consistently refer to Kamakura Japan as medieval or “early medieval.” Ethan Segal and Karl Friday title their essays with “early medieval,” but almost all essays in the volume deal with the Kamakura period and most unreservedly use the term “medieval” for their Kamakura topics. Thus the issue of whether the Kamakura period should be considered medieval is far from settled.

classical age, or the beginning of the medieval era, is largely one of emphasis and scope.¹⁶ Either way, Mass and his colleagues' revised understanding of Japan's medieval characteristics has indelibly created a portrait of Kamakura Japan much closer to its Heian antecedents than was previously thought.

It is also important to note briefly that much of the reinterpretation of the Kamakura period in English scholarship was being helped along the way by Japanese scholars who were making similar re-assessments of medieval Japan in the 1960s and 70s. Most notably, Uwayokote Masataka began advancing a more court-tilted understanding of Kamakura power through a series of articles starting in the late 1960s.¹⁷ One of Uwayokote's major contributions was the idea that *insei*, or rule by retired emperors, was the dominant political framework for the entire Kamakura period, and that the Kamakura Bakufu was one organ of government under the authority of the retired emperor. Mass' edited volume *Court and Bakufu* (1982), which was perhaps the first real wave of Kamakura reinterpretation in English, featured many contributors who argued in various ways for the resilience of the imperial court throughout the Kamakura period. It is thus significant that Uwayokote, along with other revisionists like Kuroda Toshio and Hashimoto Yoshihiko, populate the footnotes of essays by Cameron Hurst, Cornelius Kiley, and others in the volume, signifying the important influence Japanese scholars had on the English-language movement to reinterpret the beginning of medieval Japan.

Contrasting Approaches: Varley and Goble on Go-Daigo

¹⁶ For example, Alexander Bay brings up this question of how to interpret the Kamakura period in his recent review of Andrew Goble's *Confluences of Medicine* in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 71 no. 3, p. 803. Though Goble was one of the scholars revising the start date of the medieval shift, Bay points out that much of Goble's new work on Kamakura medicine seems to suggest "medieval" changes were already taking place before the fourteenth century.

¹⁷ Many of these articles were collected in his 1991 monograph, *Kamakura jidai seijishi kenkyū*.

How much the field of medieval Japanese history has now changed is evident by comparing works from before and after the mid-1970s that take different approaches to the same topic.¹⁸ For example, Paul Varley set an early milestone for pre-modern Japanese studies with his 1971 monograph, *Imperial Restoration in Medieval Japan*, assessing emperor Go-Daigo's failed attempt to restore imperial power (the Kenmu Restoration) and the resulting creation of two competing imperial lines (the Northern and Southern courts) in the fourteenth century. Varley then traced the historiography of the event into the modern period, when the significance of Go-Daigo's revolt and competing lineage proved controversial amid the late 19th and early twentieth-century project to emphasize Japan's unbroken imperial line. Yet despite its many benefits, Varley's work is representative of the older approach to primary sources. He drew his conclusions almost exclusively from the viewpoints in literary works like *Taiheiki* and *Baishōron*, the war tales centered on the Kenmu restoration period, with occasional reference to the historical summaries of Japanese scholars.¹⁹ Influenced by their tropes of inevitability, Varley cast Go-Daigo as a reactionary figure, out of touch with the realities of warrior power.²⁰

In the 1990s Andrew Goble, one of Mass' students, published his book on the Kenmu Restoration entitled *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution*. Goble's radically different approach to sources is immediately apparent, as he cites extensively from land documents, petitions, imperial dispositions, and the law codes promulgated during Kenmu. He also draws effectively from the detailed diary of the Hanazono emperor, a cousin of Go-Daigo from a rival imperial branch. In fact, he pointedly avoids citing the *Taiheiki* at all, except to question its biases and exaggerated

¹⁸ Many thanks to Martin Collcutt, who encouraged comparison between the two below works to great effect in his Early Japan seminar at Princeton.

¹⁹ Many examples abound of his use of these tales, but see *Imperial Restoration*, pp. 75-80, 79, and 86-89 for relatively unquestioning use of *Taiheiki* and *Baishōron*.

²⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 80, 82, and 95 for particularly strong comments about Go-Daigo's ineffectiveness and reactionary outlook.

details.²¹ His interpretation of Go-Daigo's revolt casts him as a revolutionary figure, confident and forward-looking: a man in control of his destiny, and not out of touch with the importance of the military leaders around him.²² In fact, Goble is at pains to point out how many of Go-Daigo's policies were well-reasoned and potentially very successful had his regime managed to stay in power.²³

That, within less than thirty years, two Anglophone scholars could wrestle with the same topic and use almost entirely different source bases illustrates the influence of Jeffrey Mass and the sophistication scholarship on pre-modern Japanese history has reached as we stand at the early part of the twenty first century. But just as importantly, the comparison between Varley and Goble reveal how much is at stake with how one *interprets* the sources available. The two scholars' assessments of Go-Daigo's regime are in many ways polar opposite. Varley sees a medieval world of warrior power already well-entrenched; whereas Goble sees Go-Daigo as part of the dynamic world of commerce, more prominent local figures, a diversified and mobile warrior class, and increased cultural and intellectual activity—new possibilities that marked the dawn of the medieval world.²⁴

As this illustration shows, the newer approach to pre-modern Japanese history has tended to reject the value of texts with more obviously embellished and fictive elements, preferring instead the information that can be gleaned from documents and dairies. In particular the overuse of *Heike Monogatari* (for the twelfth century) and *Taiheiki* (for the fourteenth) by scholars of Varley's generation and before were a major reason Mass and his cohort rejected the

²¹ For example, the few times he cites *Taiheiki* he qualifies the veracity of its quotations or draws attention to the embellished nature of the text and how it has unduly influenced scholarship. *Kenmu*, pp. 42, 70, and 251-252.

²² See, for example, the introduction, especially pp.xvi-xvii, and pp. 266-269.

²³ See especially *ibid.*, pp. 266-269.

²⁴ *Kenmu*, p. 273.

reliability of belletristic works. One text, however, has managed to survive the sea change in scholarship despite its literary elements: the *Azuma Kagami*, the official chronicle of the Kamakura Bakufu mentioned earlier. Though compiled from a wide range of texts and containing many passages of embellishment, storytelling, and sometimes outright propaganda, its usefulness as basic timeline of Kamakura-period events ensured that Mass and his students still use it frequently for dates, if not for content.²⁵

The status of pre-modern studies in Japan is also worth noting. With the revisions of Uwayokote and other Japanese scholars, highly-nuanced scholarship on a wide range of court-Bakufu issues has greatly expanded as a popular topic in the last two decades.²⁶ However, unlike the English-language field, approaches to sources have not changed quite as radically. In most of these works Japanese historians have continued to use embellished sources alongside more reliable historical documents to engage in historical inquiry, and this approach to sources has suffered for a lack of discrimination and scrutiny.²⁷ Even the best Japanese work is often been prone to some of the pitfalls of earlier English scholarship: namely, drawing from more aesthetic texts for data instead without interpreting these sources critically. Thus there is a pronounced need for research on the Kamakura period that combines the skepticism and rigor of Massian scholarship with the wider vision and source-base utilized in current Japanese scholarship.

²⁵ See, for example, *DKR* pp. 4, 14, 81-82, and 90 for Mass' use of *AK* for dates.

²⁶ Roughly beginning with Mori Shigeaki's book *Kamakura jidai no chōbaku kankei* (1991). There has also been a series of conferences in Japan that resulted in a collection of monographs called "Kuge to Buke" specifically on comparative frames for warrior-courtier issues.

²⁷ Ishii Susumu is a representative example of this kind of use of literary sources. See *Nihon tsūshi*, vol. 7, p. 33, where he quotes Jien without qualification to explain the relationship between Tameyoshi and Yoshitomo.

Departures

Clearly Jeffrey Mass and his colleagues have made huge contributions to our understanding of medieval Japan, and demonstrated irrevocably that documentary evidence is in many ways the most solid foundation historians can have for understanding how land, economy, and government functioned in Japan. The research made by the documentary approach has provided an invaluable framework for understanding medieval history. But with this firm basis of institutional history successfully sketched out, we are free to build on the foundation of knowledge provided by Massian scholarship and venture into more cultural, intellectual, and social territory. In order to answer these different questions, we need to assess the true value of many of the sources recent scholars have discounted, and find a way to read and interpret sources often considered literary and fictional.

One of the practical reasons for broadening the scope of historical sources is that skepticism toward literary texts in the current history field has only increased the disciplinary gap between Japanese history and literature in English. This in turn has prevented cross-pollination from literature scholars that could help expand historical research away from solely political or economic concerns.²⁸ As it stands, the literary texts that single-handedly fueled the study of pre-modern Japan until the mid-1970s have been cut adrift from historical discussion—a phenomenon disorienting to novice students who read conflicting surveys on Japan, but no less damaging to active scholars as well. For if land documents and court records are only read by historians, and literary diaries and tales are only read by literature scholars, how do we properly understand the breadth of socio-cultural experience in any given age? Such a

²⁸ However, a few attempts have been made to work across disciplinary lines, most notably by literature scholar Elizabeth Oyler, *Swords, Oaths, and Prophetic Visions*, and historian Hitomi Tonomura, e.g. “Court and Bakufu in Her Flesh” in *Currents*.

strong separation between literature and history does not give either discipline its due. Instead, this bifurcation creates the illusion that we have two groups of texts from the past—“historical” documents and “literary” documents—that are the products of two different and incompatible worlds.²⁹

In fact, all texts are created for specific purposes, written by a specific author or group of authors, and imbued with specific points of view and a particular positionality. Thus each text needs to be read according to its personal, political, and ideological biases. Even the most “reliable” sources are not transparent collections of historical facts and details to be drawn uncritically into a new narrative conglomeration; they need to be *interpreted*. Diaries, chronicles, and other texts are not immune from the kinds of fictive elements and exaggerations that more obviously plague belletristic works like war tales. The greater challenge for pre-modern studies especially, where there is often a more limited range of sources available, is to engage with all sources from a time period, no matter how developed and stylized their literary elements. Only the full range of textual information can give us clues into the intellectual and cultural world our objects of study inhabited.

This general need for a wider vision of historical sources is made more urgent by the particularities of the subject of this study, the Jōkyū Disturbance. Because of the brevity and secrecy of Go-Toba’s war, almost no documentation on exists about his planning leading up to the outbreak of hostilities in 1221, nor does much exist from the events of the war itself.³⁰ Perhaps more importantly, courtier diaries, which often provide a great repository of dateable information, have mostly large gaps for the period around the Jōkyū Disturbance. The only

²⁹ Mimi Yiengpruksawan brilliantly frames this problem with regard to our understanding of Heian-period “Fujiwara” culture in “What’s in a Name?” pp. 426-429, though her conclusion is to essentially reject the wholesale reliability of literature.

³⁰ *DKR*, pp. 13 and 16.

sizeable cache of documents relating to Jōkyū are the punishments and land settlements meted out after the conclusion of the war, which in essence can only tell us who the Bakufu promoted or demoted based on their actions in the conflict.³¹ Yet the relative lack of documents is not the end of the story. What the Jōkyū Disturbance generated, far more than extant documentary evidence, is a large group of texts on the more embellished end of the spectrum: primarily historical tales, war tales, biographies, and works of historical argumentation. If we want to say anything of substance about the Jōkyū Disturbance beyond the breakdown of its participants, we need to somehow deal with this wider range of sources.³² The multiplicity of these texts, along with insights from relevant courtier diaries, documents, anecdotes, and religious texts, allows us to investigate new issues in the history of the Jōkyū Disturbance and the changing relationship between courtiers and warriors in this period. The cultural effects of the Disturbance, the intellectual currents that ran through early Kamakura society, the practical realities of family and institutional loyalty, and the military tactics of the age can all be teased out of these texts. But this venture to flesh out the history of the thirteenth century from such a wide range of texts must be made with care.

Pre-modern historical research is often disparaged because of its tendency to take problematic sources and concepts, often from literature, at face value—indeed, some have argued for these reasons that studying pre-modern societies is pointless.³³ Against such criticism,

³¹ Mass has already looked extensively at these documents in *DKR*, and used them effectively to hazard guesses about Go-Toba's fighting men. See chapter three for my interpretation building off of Mass' work.

³² Noguchi Minoru, "Jikōjibon Jōkyūki no shiryōteki hyōka ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu," p. 45. Mass essentially backs away from the issue by implying that the post-Jōkyū judicial settlements are the only useful way to analyze the Disturbance; for example *DKR* pp. 16 and 35.

³³ For example, in *Positions* vol.7.2, Harold Harootunian says that studies on Japan "seek to account for the premodern" without "acknowledgment that we are encountering real alterity, real difference that may be beyond our grasp," p. 602; in fact, all ancient cultures are "societies that we'll never be able to understand," p. 603.

however, a full study of the Jōkyū Disturbance can illustrate a way to investigate pre-modern sources with more methodological rigor. Because we have many detailed, vibrant, and ideologically juxtaposed texts dealing with the Jōkyū Disturbance, their differences can actually point the way to a more fruitful framework for analysis. My contention is that an approach that intentionally scrutinizes biases in a wide range of sources can be a new way for researchers to overcome the paucity of sources in pre-modern history more broadly.³⁴

Attention to tropes, characterization, and style are just as important as attention to information, dating, and historical plausibility in order to make sense of the great variety of writing from early medieval Japan. Looking at sources with a more careful eye to these literary elements has numerous benefits for the study of the past. Such an analysis can clarify the textual relationship between different sources, allowing us to sift out the layers of meaning added to older source materials and problematize the reliability of texts normally read on their own. This process of critical reading can also elucidate what exactly is at stake for the authors and editors of pre-modern works, as their use of tropes and characters betray their different biases, assumptions, and political agendas. I will illustrate the benefits of such a process of deep reading and comparison in section III, but first let us look more closely at the different texts we have to help us understand the Jōkyū Disturbance.

II. The Texts

³⁴ Nor is the issue of how to interpret sources only relevant to pre-modern studies: the struggles of pre-modernists are only exaggerated forms of problems that plague the study of any time period. Though pre-modernists are overwhelmingly confronted with biased sources, incomplete archives and records, distortion and legend, textual tampering—either directly by politically-motivated groups throughout history, or over time by uneven distribution, degradation and common copying errors—the difference between ancient and modern is only one of degree. Because so few sources exist for early time periods, and because there is little else besides archaeology to fill in those gaps, scholars of the modern era may be lulled into a false sense of security that their own age—replete with newspapers and other mass media, sound and/or video recording, and almost limitless written, visual and material sources—is immune from the same problems of interpretation and bias.

Because most texts written in the pre-modern period were anonymous, we have to begin by recognizing how little we know about the actual authors of these texts. Of the longer texts we have dealing with the Jōkyū Disturbance, only one has definitively established authorship (Jien's *Gukanshō*). For the rest we have varying degrees of knowledge about what kind of writer or group of writers and/or compilers were behind each text. From what we do know or can guess by textual content, however, we can loosely group Jien's treatise *Gukanshō*, *Rokudai Shōjiki*, and the historical tale *Masukagami*, as well as relevant portions from courtier diaries into a court-based orbit, where it is clear that the writers identified with the aristocracy and were most familiar with the happenings of the imperial court at Kyoto. We can then group the chronicle *Azuma Kagami* and the war tales *Jikojibon Jōkyūki* and its variants into a warrior-based orbit, where depictions revolve more around Kamakura and the Bakufu warriors, and knowledge of the court is more haphazard. This delineation is by no means airtight, but will serve our primary purpose of contextualizing these works and gaining insight into how people in Kyoto and Kamakura viewed the chain of events unfolding in 1221.

Azuma Kagami

Azuma Kagami ("The Eastern Mirror" 吾妻鑑, sometimes abbreviated here AK) has undoubtedly been considered the most important source on Kamakura history for centuries. It is a chronicle sponsored by the Hōjō family in the late thirteenth century, thought to have been written sometime between 1268 and 1301.³⁵ Like much of the tradition of Chinese history-writing, *Azuma Kagami* is in an annalistic format and is written in *kanbun*, or Sino-Japanese. The text covers the years from 1180 to 1266 with each entry dated as in a diary.

³⁵ Shinoda, *The Founding of the Kamakura Shogunate*, p.7.

But it is important to remember that a mere chronological framework, as well as a division into dates, does not make *Azuma Kagami* a diary. It was first of all compiled from a wide range of Bakufu sources, including administrative documents, correspondence and reports. But house records of important military families have also been utilized, as well as court diaries like *Gyokuyō* and *Meigetsuki*, and even war tales.³⁶ With such disparate source texts jumbled and chopped into a chronicle format, finding a single authorial voice may seem like an elusive prospect. However, the unity *Azuma Kagami* does have is derived from its political function: to document the Bakufu's policies and to legitimize the Hōjō and their allies as wise leaders, which may take the form of valorizing certain characters or mentioning only episodes that highlight the Bakufu in a positive light.³⁷

Jikōjibon Jōkyūki

Jikōjibon Jōkyūki ("Tale of Jōkyū, Jiko Temple version" 持光寺本承久記) is a comparatively short war tale describing the events of the Jōkyū Disturbance. Scholars have come to a consensus that the *Jikōjibon* is the earliest of the *Jōkyūki* texts, collated sometime between 1230 and 1240. Current speculation is that the text has some connection to the Miura, a powerful Bakufu family in the early Kamakura period.³⁸ Unlike the later *Jōkyūki* variants and other warrior-centered texts like *Azuma Kagami*, *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki* frames its narrative in strongly Buddhist terms.³⁹ It is also considered unusual for its iconoclastic portrayal of warriors having

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 9-10. See the extended discussion in Gomi Fumihiko, *Azuma kagami no hōhō*, pp. 86-146 and Hirata Toshiharu's article "Azuma kagami hensan no sairyō no saikentō" for more on the compilation process and source materials for *AK*.

³⁷ See Gomi, pp. 77-79 on valorizing warriors. See also Chapter two, section I on Yoritomo.

³⁸ Noguchi Minoru, "Jikojibon Jōkyūki no shiryōteki hyōka ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu," pp. 47-49.

³⁹ Yuge Shigeru, *Rokudai shōjiki no seiritsu to tenkai*, p. 159.

little regard for loyalty—in fact, some have argued that it lacks the distinct warrior ideology present in the later variants.⁴⁰ One might even say, reading some of the speeches in the *Jikōjibon*, that there is a definite populist element to the tale that is quite unique, as ordinary warriors show disdain to higher-ups and the courtly power structure itself.

William McCullough, who translated *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki* into English, dismisses its literary quality vis-à-vis classics like *Heike Monogatari*, calling it a completely undeveloped war tale.⁴¹ Nevertheless he claims its value lies precisely in its primitive state, as a way to see how a bare-bones chronicle, adhering closely to historicity, looked before it became embellished along the lines of *Heike Monogatari*. McCullough has some valid points here, especially considering how soon after its events *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki* was written. However, as I will argue throughout the dissertation, we must not mistake brevity or simplicity for factualness. Its early creation date, however, makes it useful to get a sense of warrior values in the age immediately after the Jōkyū Disturbance.

***Jōkyūki* variants (Rufubon and Maedabon)**

Two other major strands or families of *Jōkyūki* variants are extant. The earlier of the two is called alternately the *Rufubon* (流布本 “popular version”) or the *Kokatsujibon* (古活字本 “old print version”), and is thought to date from the 1240s. The later of the two was owned by the Maeda family and as such is called the *Maedabon* or the *Maedakebon* (前田[家]本 “Maeda family version”), thought to date anywhere from the 1272 to 1333.⁴² These two texts are often talked about as variants of the earlier *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*, but it is clear that the connection is loose

⁴⁰ See Otsu Yuichi. “Jōkyūki,” in *Gunki to ōken no ideorogi*.

⁴¹ He actually uses the term “aborted embryo.” “Shokyuki,” pp. 164-165.

⁴² These dates have been argued most recently by Yuge Shigeru, *Rokudai shōjiki no seiritsu to tenkai*, p. 152.

at best. The *Rufubon* and the *Maedabon* are clearly closely related to each other, matching up in basic storytelling arch and sharing perhaps eighty to ninety percent of the same content. However, they can only be seen as connected to the *Jikōjibon* version by the fact that they deal with the same basic topic and barest historical outline of events.⁴³ Many sections in the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon* have no parallels in the *Jikōjibon*, and even when the same episodes are recounted, the *Jikōjibon*'s versions bear no resemblance to the other two.⁴⁴ Compared to *Jikōjibon*, the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon* spend much more time on the battlefield and treat the military aspect of Jōkyū in much greater detail.⁴⁵

Moreover, there are fascinating differences between the *Maedabon* and *Rufubon* versions. The *Rufubon* was written first, and the *Maedabon* clearly adapted information from *Rufubon*—either directly or through a shared ancestor. The *Maedabon* has significantly more content than *Rufubon*, but in multiple places these additions lead to mistakes or incongruities.⁴⁶ However, these differences, owing to the *Maedabon*'s much later compilation date, give us great insight into how warrior identity was changing over the course of the thirteenth century.

Court Diaries

The noble families that staffed the court bureaucracy at Kyoto maintained their positions of power and prestige through both official and unofficial channels. In this tightly-knit court society, one's heredity, sense of decorum, sensitivity to tradition, and personal connections were vital, especially since every elite lineage was in competition with others for limited government

⁴³ McCullough, "Shōkyūki" p. 167.

⁴⁴ See section III below for a comparison.

⁴⁵ Matsubayashi Yasuaki, *Jōkyūki*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Kusaka Tsutomu, *Maedakebon Jōkyūki*, pp. 293-295.

positions and perks. In such a highly stratified and ceremonial world, families would be in an advantage if they could keep helpful records of precedent, giving them the tools to effectively handle the duties of court life and protect family interests. Accordingly, the heads of some of the most powerful court families in the Heian period began keeping personal diaries to be passed down within their lineage.

These diaries were written in *kanbun*, or Classical Chinese orthography, and recorded in minute detail events considered pertinent by the author (usually the head of his lineage) during the course of a day. Courtier diarists, we have reason to believe, would wake up in the morning and write down all of the major happenings of the previous day before beginning the new one.⁴⁷ Thus they are extremely useful for historians due to their dateable content, though family editing could happen over time. Some of the court diaries relevant for the early Kamakura period used in this study are *Gyokuyō* (玉葉) by regent Kūjo Kanezane (九条兼実, 1149-1207), *Meigetsuki* (明月記) by the poet Fujiwara no Teika (藤原定家, 1162-1241), and *Inokuma Kanpakuki* (猪隈関白記) by regent Konoe Iezane (近衛家実, 1179-1243).

Gukanshō

Gukanshō (“Foolish and Narrow Notes”), was written by a monk named Jien (1155-1225) who, though a cleric most of his life, was eminently a part of courtier political life. He was from a branch of the Fujiwara family (the Kujō) that advocated—and benefited from—cooperation with the Kamakura Bakufu. Sensing the advent of more open hostilities between Go-Toba and Kamakura, Jien wrote down his own version of the history of Japan as a treatise to

⁴⁷ See Yoshida Sanae’s chapter in her and Joan Piggott’s edited *Teishinkōki: Year 939 in the Journal of Regent Fujiwara No Tadahira*.

dissuade the retired emperor from acting against the Bakufu.⁴⁸ This history emphasizes the duty of loyal ministers to serve and counsel leaders, even if those leaders are warriors. Evidence suggests he wrote the body of the work fairly quickly during a seventh-month period in the later part of 1219, and then completed a few additional sections in 1220 and early 1221.⁴⁹ But Jien also continued to make additions to *Gukanshō* after the Jōkyū Disturbance, and his later terse comments about the war's outcome are just as enlightening as the effusively hopeful stance he took before it occurred.⁵⁰

Like the other narrative sources, *Gukanshō* has been used uncritically to provide details of events leading up to the Jōkyū Disturbance, even though much of his history was conjectural and imaginative. Jien dispenses positive and negative judgments on historical characters with equal force—often, it seems, solely on the basis of how well they treated his Kujō branch of the Fujiwara family.⁵¹ As I mentioned above, however, the significance of *Gukanshō* as a document of its time has been relatively unexplored. The fact that Jien wrote his treatise with the specific aim of discouraging the Jōkyū Disturbance, and the way in which he bases his history on the co-rulership legacy of the Fujiwara clan, makes his history useful as an artifact as well as a narrative. Jien's optimism about the new Kujō shogun-designate Yoritsune and his plea to Go-Toba not to “take a course of opposition” to him reflects the strong desire for peace and

⁴⁸ Paul Varley, “*The Place of Gukanshō in Japanese Intellectual History*,” p. 485. See also below.

⁴⁹ The dating of *Gukanshō* has been fraught with controversy among Japanese scholars, culminating in open debates the 1950s and 60s. Ishida Ichirō convincingly argued for the above timeline and still successfully defended it in 2000; see *Gukanshō no kenkyū*, especially p. 28 and pp. 52-54. Of course, by “late in the year” I mean late in the East Asian luna-solar year, in which the first day of the first month occurred in what would be February or March in the Gregorian calendar—see introduction for discussion of dates.

⁵⁰ Yuge Shigeru, *Rokudai shōjiki godai teiō monogatari*, pp. 4-5.

⁵¹ Stated eloquently in Mass' review of *Future and the Past*, p. 598. Jien reserved his most vitriolic attacks for members of rival Fujiwara branches, especially the Konoe—see chapter two, part II.

cooperation of the early thirteenth century.⁵² Nor should we think it insignificant that Jien was willing to spill so much ink in his old age—sixty-five—to craft this warning in the first place. In short, I wish to re-establish the usefulness of *Gukanshō* to capture courtier angst on the eve of the Jōkyū Disturbance.

Rokudai Shōjiki

Rokudai Shōjiki (六代勝事記, “Record of Surprising Events in Six Reigns”) was written by an anonymous writer professing to be a life-long court attendant who had since retired to the clergy. Though he does not state his name, the author reveals a significant amount of information about himself, which has encouraged speculation about his identity.⁵³ It is also clear that he wrote the text sometime between 1222 and 1224—right in the aftermath of Jōkyū—and that he was over sixty years old at the time. Like *Gukanshō*, *Rokudai* was written as a commentary on Japanese history, and its clear objective is to place the blame for Jōkyū on the bad decisions and immorality of Go-Toba.⁵⁴ Its strong sympathy for Kyoto and courtiers, however, makes it an interesting counterweight to *Azuma Kagami* and *Jōkyūki*, especially when it begins to emphasize the noble deaths of Go-Toba’s supporters who are often maligned in the pro-warrior documents.⁵⁵

Rokudai is ignored in English scholarship on Jōkyū and is used only sporadically in Japanese scholarship, and its benefits for studying this time period have only recently become

⁵² *Gukanshō*, pp. 349-350; Brown p. 230-31.

⁵³ The strongest theory is the one offered by Yuge Shigeru that the author was Fujiwara Takatada, a son of Regent Matsudono Motofusa, though many other theories have been advocated. See *Rokudai* pp.6-13.

⁵⁴ *Rokudai* prefaces Go-Toba’s reign with dismissive remarks about his literary abilities, and suggests his undue love of military arts was already a danger to the state; Appendix, p. 230.

⁵⁵ Appendix, pp. 242-244.

apparent.⁵⁶ Since its narrative continues to the full conclusion of the Jōkyū Disturbance, it gives us a coherent courtly perspective on a number of historical details not included in *Gukanshō*. Its extremely restricted window of composition undeniably makes it the earliest document to depict the Disturbance, closer to the events it describes than the later *Azuma Kagami* and *Jōkyūki* texts. In section II we will see further how the *Rokudai* text was used as a source for other narratives. I have included my full translation of *Rokudai Shōjiki* in the appendix to the dissertation.

Masukagami

Masukagami (増鏡, “The Clear Mirror”), on the other hand, is much later than the first two courtier texts. Most estimates place its date of composition between 1338 and 1376, giving it historical proximity only to the content of its last few chapters.⁵⁷ Most scholars place the date closer to the later end of this spectrum, though some still argue for the earlier range.⁵⁸ Either way it is a document of the fourteenth century, though it takes as its subject the history of the Kamakura period from 1180 to 1333. *Masukagami* has been studied in Japanese and English as part of the genre of historical tales (*rekishi monogatari*) that narrate semi-fictionalized accounts of the lives of Japanese courtiers. George Perkins, who translated *Masukagami* into English, fully evaluates the literary merit of the text within this historical tale tradition.⁵⁹ However, most treatments of these historical tales assess their view of history superficially, often remarking only on whether the authors paint characters two-dimensionally or outright ignore certain events.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Hirata Toshiharu, *Heike monogatari no hihanteki kenkyū*, p. 1634. My translation will be the first study of *Rokudai* in English.

⁵⁷ Perkins, *The Clear Mirror*, p. 224. Its authorship is unknown, although there are different theories. See *ibid.*, p. 223-24.

⁵⁸ See Nishizawa, *Masukagami kenkyū josetsu*, especially pp. 33-46.

⁵⁹ Perkins, pp. 13-16.

⁶⁰ Perkins, pp. 14-15.

According to these terms *Masukagami* is lacking as narrative history, since it obstinately glorifies the activities of the court throughout the Kamakura period and disregards most of the affairs of the warrior regime. But though *Masukagami* ignores much of what was going on in Kamakura, it does have some interesting things to say about warriors. It captures the ethos of its time with a much sharper distinction between a shifty Bakufu and an upright court, imbued with deep nostalgia and sympathy for Go-Toba as well as his supporters.⁶¹ Thus it is useful as a window into how warriors and courtiers were seen, not in the Kamakura period itself, but in the later fourteenth century, making it a critical resource on changing courtier-warrior perceptions in Japan.

III. An Illustration: Masako's Speech

Masako's Speech to the Bakufu

Now let us turn to an illustration of more textual approach to historical sources by focusing on a famous incident from the Jōkyū Disturbance. Yoritomo, the first leader of the Bakufu, married into the Hōjō family and after his death his brother-in-law Hōjō Yoshitoki became the de facto head of the Bakufu. So when Go-Toba declared war in 1221, his order of attack was specifically aimed at Yoshitoki as the “usurper” of the Bakufu.⁶² In a famous scene, Yoritomo's widow, Hōjō Masako, learns about Go-Toba's attack on her brother. She gives a rousing speech in front of the warriors asking them to fight back, and inspired by her words the Bakufu leaders confer about their response to Go-Toba's edict of war. Masako's speech is often cited as one of the major factors in the Bakufu's ability to unify under Yoshitoki and succeed in

⁶¹ The extended narrative of Go-Toba's exile to Oki is particularly sympathetic, seen on *KBTK* 87, pp. 280-281. The Bakufu and its warriors, except for one incident with Yoshitoki and Yasutoki, are unnamed and amorphous “easterners” and their actions are often couched in highly speculative language. For example, see p. 272 and 275.

⁶² See chapter three, section I.

defeating Go-Toba's army so quickly. Certainly it is one of the most stirring moments in the sources and a pivotal moment in the chain of events leading up to the Jōkyū Disturbance.

In fact, secondary scholarship and surveys on the Jōkyū Disturbance have invariably centered on Masako's speech as a pivotal event.⁶³ Several scholars have said that the speech highlights Masako's leadership abilities and was an important foothold in the formation of warrior power in the Kamakura period.⁶⁴ Seki Yukihiro and Nomura Ikuyo also make the speech an important part of their biographies of Hōjō Masako herself.⁶⁵ Though admitting the speech is overused in scholarship, Seki nevertheless credits the speech as evidence of Masako's persuasiveness and her intuition in perceiving the real threat Go-Toba represented to the Bakufu.⁶⁶ In short, there has been a tendency to discuss the impact, intent, or import of the speech, but always with the assumption that Masako did in fact rally the Bakufu in this manner.

But did the speech actually happen? We have to confront the question, though it is difficult to arrive at a reliable answer. The historicity of the speeches presented in ancient narratives continues to vex scholars in many fields.⁶⁷ The first cause for doubt is, indeed, the rather literary quality of the scene. It is the only speech of considerable length present in the depictions of the Jōkyū Disturbance, and by far the most rhetorically complex. The situation might seem too spontaneous, perhaps, to reflect real life: as soon as Masako hears about Go-Toba's intent, she immediately calls the leaders to her and begins her oration. The scene is

⁶³ See first of all Kobayashi Yasuko, "Jōkyū no ran ni okeru masako no yakuwari."

⁶⁴ Mochizuki, "Jōkyū no ran ni okeru masako ni tsuite," p. 18-19. Yamamoto, *Yoritomo no tenka sōsō*, p. 190.

⁶⁵ For Nomura, see pp. 101-103.

⁶⁶ Seki, pp. 142-145.

⁶⁷ In *A History of Histories*, for example, Burrow says that Josephus presents particularly "unrealistic speeches," p. 146; yet he says Thucydides "reveals his own mind more fully in the speeches than in the narrative," p. 39. See Deborah Beck, "Speech Act Types, Conversational Exchange, and the Speech Representational Spectrum in Homer," *Narratology and Interpretation*, for analysis of narrative speeches as pure literary inventions, especially pp. 148-151.

full of drama and pathos. Masako recalls her own suffering when she lost her husband Yoritomo, and then she plays up that sympathy to remind the Bakufu leaders how large their obligations are even now to their former lord. She then excoriates Go-Toba's clique (for their "slander," in some texts), and exhorts the warriors to march without haste on Kyoto. In some cases, she ends her speech by challenging anyone who disagrees with her to join Go-Toba immediately, or even to kill her first before defecting! It is a speech designed to motivate action, a speech that ties historical nostalgia with immediate political needs; a speech that manipulates the crowd through rhetoric.⁶⁸ It is, we might say, almost Shakespearean.

Yet dramatic things do happen in real life, especially in a world where political action was often expressed in public displays of loyalty. For example, one scholar has examined Pericles' famous funeral oration, the historicity of which has been a subject of much debate, and instructively concludes that it was "too public, too local, and too recent" to have been a complete fabrication.⁶⁹ All of these conditions are met by Masako's speech: It was a public address, even though some sources claim the audience was only to the top echelon of Bakufu leaders; it was not given in some isolated locale but rather in the middle of the compact and bustling town of Kamakura; and the first version of the speech appears in the historical record less than five years after its supposed occurrence. This is, in actuality, much faster than the turnaround for historians in the ancient Mediterranean or ancient China who might be writing of events within living memory, but often not setting stylus (or brush) to page until many decades later.

The second potential problem is multi-faceted, and will require much more sustained inquiry. The speech, like many events in the Jōkyū orbit, exists in multiple versions. Here we

⁶⁸ See also John Burrow's discussion of speeches "designed to further immediate action," *A History of Histories*, p. 20.

⁶⁹ Burrow, *A History of Histories*, p. 32.

have some benefits denied to our colleagues studying the ancient Greco-Roman world, who are fortunate if they have one extant text describing a given time period. We can use these differences to gain new leverage on issues of authenticity, textual transmission, and the cultural relevance of an event to different groups. But multiplicity of sources is a mixed blessing; it presents challenges as well. Do the differences between the speeches indicate a lack of consensus among people at the time about what really happened? Do they imply complete literary invention, thus making us doubt historical authenticity more? Or should the *similarities* between textual versions be more disconcerting? After all, if these textual families have a long history of interaction, a strong degree of similarity might simply indicate that each later text was borrowing from an earlier *textual* tradition, instead of an author drawing from experience, collective memory, or hearsay of an actual event. Are these authors depicting the lived past or simply manipulating cultural production? Are they interacting with history or only with each other? This problem is at the heart of the question of how to interpret different historical sources.

The *Azuma Kagami* and *Rokudai Shōjiki* Accounts

In order to fully understand what is at stake in the differences between versions, we have to dive headfirst into the minutiae of textual comparison. Only in-depth analysis can suggest which elements of the story we can accept more strongly and which we must reconsider, even if these elements coexist within the same text. Let us first look at two of the most celebrated and highly debated texts on Masako's speech. Later I will broaden the investigation to other texts, but for now we can get the best sense of what is at stake in interpreting literary sources by comparing the two versions that have the most complex relationship to historicity and to each other. The two texts are *Azuma Kagami*, the official chronicle of the Kamakura Bakufu, and *Rokudai Shōjiki*, a courtier text.

The following is Masako's speech and the decision for war that it brought about as recorded in *Azuma Kagami*:

1221/5/19: ...Summoning the housemen before her blinds, Masako spoke to them through Adachi Kagemori, the Vice-Governor of Akita Fortress. "Listen carefully to my final words. Since the days when Yoritomo, the late Captain of the Right, put down the court's enemies and founded the Kanto regime, the obligations you have incurred for offices, ranks, emoluments, and stipends have in their sum become higher than mountains and deeper than the sea. You must, I am sure, be eager to repay them. Because of the slander of traitors, an unrighteous imperial order has now been issued. Those of you who value your reputations will wish to kill Hideyasu, Taneyoshi, and the others at once in order to secure the patrimony of the three generations of shoguns. If any of you wish to join the ex-emperor, speak out." The warriors all accepted her charge. Choked with tears, they said little in reply, but they were determined to repay their debts with their lives...

At about the time of the sunset bell, Hōjō Tokifusa, Hōjō Yasutoki, Ōe Hiromoto, Miura Yoshimura, and Adachi Kagemori met to confer at Yoshitoki's house. Opinion was divided about the course to follow. Some wished to fortify the roads through Hakone and Ashigara and wait, but Hiromoto said, "Although such a course might serve temporarily, not all the eastern warriors are loyal to us. A prolonged defense of the passes would mean our defeat. We must trust to Heaven and send armies to Kyoto at once."⁷⁰

Here is the *Rokudai* narrative of the speech and its aftermath:

When this happened, the Second Rank Nun Masako called together all the powerful warriors to the garden and spoke to them: "Every heart should listen as one; these are my last words. The late Shogun Yoritomo followed in the footsteps of his ancestors the Iyo Lay Monk Yoriyoshi and Hachiman Taro Yoshiie and took care of the eastern warriors. He eased the burdens of your fields and guaranteed your desired posts and ranks. Your obligations to him are already higher than Mount Sumeru, and your gratitude should be deeper than the ocean. Throughout the rule of four shoguns we have not had the slightest blemish of a mistake, and we have caused no injury to the authority of the court. But in denial of Heaven's punishments, disloyal ministers have prided themselves in unrighteous military pursuits and sent down this edict to capture Yoshitoki. Won't you consider this: they will kill all of our men and make all our women their slaves; shrines and temples will become dust and ash, and the estates of great generals will be plowed into fields; the Buddhist Law will be destroyed midway through its journey east! Those who understand their obligations and treasure their names, capture Hideyasu and Taneyoshi, to preserve your families and to make names for yourselves." When they heard these words, they could make no other reply than the tears that choked them. They only wanted to give their unimportant lives as payment

⁷⁰ Translation by William McCullough, "The *Azuma Kagami* Account of the Shōkyū War," used hereafter for all *Azuma Kagami* translations from the Jōkyū era unless otherwise noted. The original text for McCullough and my own analysis is the version of *Azuma Kagami* in the *Kokushi taikēi*.

for their heavy obligations, without a second thought.
 As the warriors each left the meeting they asked themselves, “Why would Hachiman Bodhisattva not lead us who are so blameless? We must raise our whips and set out in the morning.” They departed only one day later.⁷¹

A brief comparison between the *Azuma Kagami* text and the *Rokudai* text reveals two things: 1) Masako’s speeches to the warriors, including the warriors’ immediate response (the first section of each selection), have enough similarities that the two passages *must* be somehow related; and 2) the discussions about battle plans (the second section) are so completely different that the two *cannot* be related.

Such blanket statements might not be initially convincing, but that is because textual comparison between these texts is complicated by a number of factors. First, is the issue of English translation: my translation of *Rokudai* and McCullough’s translation of *AK* take different liberties with our source texts. I will address this by some rewriting shortly. A bigger hindrance may be how to interpret visual differences in the original texts. Let us now turn to direct textual comparison between the two accounts.

Textual Comparison

First of all, the two texts exist in very different orthography, or writing systems. *Rokudai Shōjiki* is written in hiragana *majiribun* (交じり文, mixed syllabary and characters) whereas *Azuma Kagami* is in *kanbun* (漢文), or Sino-Japanese orthography (characters only). However, identifying two different writing systems in pre-modern Japan is far from identifying two different languages: syllabic phonographs and Chinese characters can be used to mark the same utterance. In fact, close observation between the two reveals that some of the character strings in *AK* are indeed almost completely interchangeable with the *majiribun* phrases of *Rokudai*, if the

⁷¹ My translation Appendix, pp. 240-241. I translated from Yuge Shigeru’s modern edition, *Rokudai shōjiki, godai teiō monogatari*.

latter are treated as the Japanese way to read *kanbun* (called *kundoku*). In other words, we should not let the visual differences between *kanbun* or *majiribun* disguise the fact that they may be presenting almost identical words and phrases. Thus at the beginning of Masako’s speech:

Rokudai Shōjiki (majiribun)

各心を一にしてきくべし。
 是は最後の詞也。
Onono kokoro wo hitotsu ni shite kiku beshi.
Kore wa saigo no kotoba nari.
 Lit: Every heart should listen as one.
 These are [my] last words.

Azuma Kagami (kanbun)

皆一心可奉。
 是最期詞也。
Mina kokoro wo hitotsu ni shite ukeru beshi.
Kore wa saigo no kotoba nari
 Lit: Every heart should listen as one.
 These are [my] last words.

As the romanized text in the second row indicates, despite their visual differences both passages would be *read* very similarly in Japanese. With an eye to more of these camouflaged pairs, we can see exactly how much of the *Rokudai* and *AK* accounts are a result of direct borrowing—or if we were unkind, plagiarism—from one or the other. For this exercise it is necessary to rewrite either my translation or McCoullough’s into more literal prose to show in English the places where the original Japanese phrases are nearly identical. These shared phrases are marked in bold:

Rokudai Shōjiki

When this happened, the Second Rank Nun Masako called together all the powerful warriors to the garden and spoke to them: “**Every heart should listen as one; these are my last words.** The late Shogun Yoritomo followed in the footsteps of his ancestors the Iyo Lay Monk Yoriyoshi and Hachiman Taro Yoshiie and took care of the eastern warriors. He eased the burdens of your fields and guaranteed your desired **posts and ranks.** Your obligations are already higher than Mount Sumeru, and **your gratitude** should be **deeper than**

Azuma Kagami

Summoning the housemen before her blinds, Masako spoke to them through Adachi Kagemori, the Vice-Governor of Akita Fortress. “**Every heart should listen as one; these are my last words.** Since the days when Yoritomo, the late Captain of the Right, put down the court’s enemies and founded the Kamakura regime, for **posts and ranks,**

the ocean. Throughout the rule of four shoguns we have not had the slightest blemish of a mistake, and we have caused no injury to the authority of the court.

But in denial of Heaven's punishments, disloyal **slandering ministers** have prided themselves in **unrighteous** military pursuits and **sent down this edict** to capture Yoshitoki.

Won't you consider this: they will kill all of our men and make all our women their slaves; shrines and temples will become dust and ash, and the estates of great generals will be plowed into fields; the Buddhist Law will be destroyed midway through its journey east! **Those who** understand their obligations and **treasure your names, capture Hideyasu and Taneyoshi**, to preserve your families and to make names for yourselves."

When they heard these words, **they were choked with tears, and said little in reply. They only wanted to give their unimportant lives in exchange for their heavy debts**, without a second thought.

emoluments and stipends **your obligations are already higher than mountains and deeper than the ocean.**

Is **your gratitude** only superficial?

Now because of **the slander** of bad **ministers, an unrighteous edict** has been **sent down. Those who treasure your names, capture and kill Hideyasu and Taneyoshi** and the others at once in order to secure the patrimony of the three generations of shoguns. If any of you wish to join the ex-emperor, speak out."

The warriors all accepted her charge.

They were choked with tears, and said little in reply. They only wanted to give their unimportant lives in exchange for their heavy debts.

The opening and closing sentences of the selection—Masako's opening phrase starting with "every heart," and the one closing passage about the warrior's response ending with "heavy debts"—are the pairs that are the most verbatim, as if they were bookends of a unified work. Moreover, if the non-shared sentences are seen as embellishments and removed, the most important points of the speech form the outline of a basic rhetorical framework that both texts have in common: Listen to me; Yoritomo gave you perks and you owe him; now slanderous men have condemned us; if you value your reputations you'll fight them. One source was using the other as rhetorical scaffolding to then replace details and phrases that were more authentic to the new text's style and agenda.⁷²

⁷² In this case, the usual question of whether there was a third Ur text is less relevant, since it is clear that *Azuma Kagami* and *Rokudai Shōjiki* share multiple sections in common (see below).

But if this basic framework is shared, who is borrowing from whom? Students in Japan and throughout the world are often taught that *kundoku* (訓読), the method of reading *kanbun*, was (and is) a way for Japanese readers to translate classical Chinese into Japanese; merely a passive tool to *read* Chinese texts in their own language. But *kanbun* was not only a form of translation, but also a way for educated Japanese to actively *produce* recorded information for themselves. Legal documents, records of sale, court directives and diaries of major courtier lineages in Japan were all customarily written in certain styles of *kanbun*, and much literature was written in *kanbun* as well.⁷³ If, for example, *kanbun* orthography was the accepted style of a certain text being written, any material the author appropriated from other works could be converted into *kanbun* to match the style of the new document. *Kundoku* was a method of reading and writing that was *reversible*.⁷⁴ Thomas Conlan has shown that part of the job of being a literate messenger in the medieval period did involve re-writing texts back and forth between *kanbun* and kana.⁷⁵ Texts in kana or *majiribun* could thus be appropriated and written in *kanbun* just as easily as *kanbun* passages could be written out in *majiribun*. Thus the style of writing itself cannot tell us anything about which text was the original and which text was doing the appropriating.

Since the early 20th century, Japanese scholars have noticed that there are multiple sections of *AK* and *Rokudai* that are shared, with Masako's speech only being the most famous. Hirata Toshiharu first brought these issues to the attention of Japanese scholars in 1939. He introduced *Rokudai Shōjiki* and outlined seven different sections of *Azuma Kagami* he argued

⁷³ As David Lurie has shown, reading and writing developed in tandem in Japan, and *kanbun* was used to produce writing much earlier than was previously thought. See *Realms of Literacy*, Chapter 4.

⁷⁴ David Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*, pp. 179-181.

⁷⁵ Thomas Conlan, "Sourcing Documents" in *Currents*, p. 27.

had been borrowed from it, a thesis he defended throughout his career.⁷⁶ He, Kubota Jun, and Gotō Tanji spearheaded research on *Rokudai Shōjiki* against criticism of scholars who had long valued *Azuma Kagami* as the most reliable of medieval sources. One scholar even wrote an angry treatise in 1960 he titled, “Return to *Azuma Kagami* what belongs to *Azuma Kagami*!” (*Azuma kagami no mono wa azuma kagami ni kaese*).⁷⁷

Though some Japanese scholars such as Yuge Shigeru still actively argue for *Rokudai*’s pre-eminence, most scholars are content to make mere mention of the similarities between the texts in a mostly unconcerned manner. Most troubling is the high degree to which survey histories and even reputable articles on the Jōkyū Disturbance or Masako’s speech continue to base their analysis entirely on *AK*, even if they are aware of other versions.⁷⁸ A typical treatment will quote and analyze the *AK* account extensively, and then mention briefly that *Rokudai* also has the speech in a version that “is mostly the same” (*hobo onaji*), in the words of one scholar.⁷⁹ Mentioning different accounts in this way is concerning, as if the fact that other texts have similar versions somehow proves the *AK* account is *more* reliable instead of possibly being less so. Even articles that point out the biases and dramatic license in *AK* seem to take the *AK*’s account, particularly of Masako’s speech, at complete face value.⁸⁰

Also troubling, the scholars that argue for *Rokudai*’s originality do not correspondingly re-shape their view of the reliability of *Azuma Kagami* or properly initiate the difficult task of

⁷⁶ As he demonstrated in his magnum opus, *Heike monogatari no hihanteki kenkyū*, (1990): pp. 1625-1633.

⁷⁷ Masuda Takahashi, in *Chūsei no mado* (1960/12): pp. 4-35.

⁷⁸ See Hashimoto: “Jōkyū no ran no gen’in ni tsuite,” Mizunuma: “Hōjō Masako sono seijisei wo shudai toshite,” and biographies of Masako quoted above, which all use *AK* for almost all quotations and take its depiction of the speech as historical fact.

⁷⁹ Sugimoto Keisaburo, “Jōkyū no ran to bungaku,” p. 20.

⁸⁰ See Mochizuki Sanae, “Jōkyū no ran ni okeru Masako ni tsuite,” pp. 15-18. Mochizuki discusses *AK*’s biases and dramatization through literary invention, but then claims that Masako’s speech shows her decisiveness and leadership ability, mentioning tangentially that the speech exists in other versions.

interpreting what these differences actually mean.⁸¹ As I have mentioned in section I, this hesitancy to adjudicate the value of different sources is a recurring problem in Japanese-language scholarship. I hope to accomplish precisely this kind of adjudication. I want to argue not only that *Rokudai* was the source text for *AK*, but also that this piece of information has radical implications for our understanding of Masako's speech—both in what it meant to people at the time, and what it can mean to historians concerned with recapturing the voices of the past. This reason is why we need to look more closely at the debate of *Azuma Kagami* versus *Rokudai Shōjiki*, not in comprehensive or general terms, but in detailed and close textual analysis. Rather than summarize all of the arguments made by scholars about these two texts at a kind of bird's eye view, I want to dive in to the answers we might get by looking closely at these short accounts of Masako's speech.

Textual dating, then, is our first tool for getting leverage on these textual issues. The *Rokudai* author says quite clearly in the introduction to his work that he was writing in the Jōō era, which gives the date of his work a very narrow window of three years: 1222-1224 inclusive. Textual studies on *Azuma Kagami*, on the other hand, have confirmed that the text was compiled in the years between 1268 and 1301.⁸² Though *AK* was compiled from many extant sources, some of which would have been quite contemporary with their events, the possibility of editing, deleting, or adding material was always on hand for the late thirteenth-century compilers. This makes *Azuma Kagami* inherently more questionable in terms of authenticity.⁸³ The brevity of

⁸¹ Yuge Shigeru's edited version of *Rokudai*, for example, continually references *AK* and other sources for their particular version of the events in *Rokudai*, but never with any decision as to which versions are more or less plausible.

⁸² See above discussion in section II.

⁸³ Though, as is evident by Kobayashi's arguments and others, some Japanese scholars use the compiled nature of *Azuma Kagami* to claim that *AK* is using a more original source that other texts like *RS* are then drawing from, though unless one completely disbelieves the dating of *RS* this becomes mere semantics.

Rokudai's composition window also makes it less plausible that the author had the time to track down and compile many different sources for his text. By contrast, the longer period and corporate nature of *AK*'s compilation very much allowed for accumulating a wide range of documentary sources, as indeed we know did happen.

Internal evidence lends makes it more credible that *AK* was borrowing from *Rokudai* than the other way around. First of all, there are some parallelisms in the selection that seem more coherent in *Rokudai* than in *AK*. Here is one example from Masako's speech:

In *Rokudai*:

重恩すでに須弥よりもたかし。

報謝のおもひ大海よりふかかるべし。

Jūon sude ni shumi yori mo takashi.

Hōsha no omoi taikai yori fukakaru beshi.

Your obligations are already higher

than Mount Sumeru

and your gratitude should be deeper than the ocean.

In *Azuma Kagami*:

其恩既高於山岳。

深於溟渤。

Sono on sude ni sangaku yori takashi.

Meibotsu yori fukashi.

Your obligations are already higher

than mountains

and deeper than the ocean.

One scholar, Kobayashi Yasuko (while a student at Taishō University), has made one of the only attempts in Japanese to analyze and evaluate the differences in the textual versions of Masako's speech. Kobayashi uses the passage above as part of an argument that the *Azuma Kagami* account was written first:

The first thing I want to emphasize is, in *Azuma Kagami* the word is "obligations" (恩) whereas in *Rokudai Shōjiki* it becomes "heavy obligations" (重恩), and "mountains" becomes "Mount Sumeru." Looking at these two examples, in both cases *Rokudai Shōjiki* has phrases that are more exaggerated (誇張された). Moreover, in *Azuma Kagami* the obligations are deeper than the (depths of) the ocean, expressing that the feeling of gratitude for the obligations is not weak, but then this is changed [in *Rokudai*] into a unified phrase (一緒になった): "your gratitude should be deeper than the ocean."⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Kobayashi Yasuko, "Jōkyū no ran ni okeru masako no yakuwari" pp. 56-57.

Kobayashi's interpretation of terminology, first of all, is misguided. There is no reason that difference in vocabulary on its own implies the *direction* of borrowing. If one source was borrowing from another, it would make sense that words and phrases would be tweaked to suit the style of the new text: *Rokudai* would tend to use more belletristic phrases and *AK* more lean ones, whoever did the borrowing. Kobayashi also does not explain why *Rokudai*'s 'unified phrase' makes it more likely to be the borrowing text. In fact, I believe this selection, for different reasons, is more convincing evidence for the opposite situation.

Rather than consider the vocabulary embellishments, we need to look at the structure of the two phrases. The *Rokudai* pattern is identical for both phrases: comparative sentences where two subjects are introduced and then said to be more superlative in a certain quality versus another noun ("Your obligations are... and your gratitude should be..."). In *Azuma*, only the first phrase follows this pattern. The second has no subject, which actually means it shares the subject of the first phrase: the obligations are *both* higher than mountains and deeper than the ocean. Considering the strong role that Chinese-style parallelism played in textual education, a parallel phrase was always considered stylistically superior to a lopsided one. A small difference, no doubt, but a telling one, for this is one of many areas of the speech where we get the impression that *Rokudai*'s text is more coherent, and *Azuma Kagami* is condensing and summarizing from it. Kobayashi was right about the stylistic differences between the texts, but incorrectly assumed that expansion or exaggerated language automatically implies invention.⁸⁵ It may only imply that the borrower decided to cut out some of the excess language of the original.

In other areas besides style we also get a sense that the *Rokudai* author's speech is a *tour de force*: he uses more stirring rhetoric, more poetic turns of phrase, and in terms of content

⁸⁵ As she also says in regard to the later portions of the speech, where the *Rokudai* author "adds ornamental and new phrases." Kobayashi, p. 57.

evinces a concern for the entirety of Japanese society. For example, near the end of the speech, the author recaptures a moment of fear as Masako imagines Go-Toba's actions portending more dire consequences:

Won't you consider this: they will kill all of our men and make all our women their slaves; shrines and temples will become dust and ash, and the estates of great generals will be plowed into fields; the Buddhist Law will be destroyed midway through its journey east!

This effusiveness is absent from *AK*, as is references to Buddhism or women: the main concern in *AK* is the livelihood of the Bakufu itself. Phrases like “the patrimony of the three shoguns” and the “founding of the Kamakura regime” pop up in *AK* but not *Rokudai*. The *AK* selection is shorter and has fewer details in its sections that are not shared with *Rokudai*. In light of how the additional details in *RS* would not be of primary importance for the *AK* compilers, it is likely they were summarizing *RS*, making their version more succinct in style and more appealing to specific Bakufu concerns.

The likelihood that *Azuma* is borrowing from *Rokudai* is also apparent from the abrupt disjuncture where the two texts diverge in content. After the warriors accept Masako's words, *AK* gives some additional backstory of the conflict between Go-Toba and Yoshitoki that I did not include in the above. But when the narrative resumes with the discussion of war plans (in the second paragraphs where I introduced each account), *AK* and *Rokudai* are completely different. In *AK*, a private council of war is commenced with head Bakufu leaders debating the course of action. In *Rokudai*, it is only an unspecified group of “powerful warriors” who hear Masako's speech and then almost spontaneously set out the following day, with no debate over anything. These differences are not coincidental. If, as I suspect, Bakufu authors borrowed the *Rokudai* version of Masako's speech for its rhetorical quality, they would have had little need to continue quoting from it after the section about the warriors' tearful response.

As Bakufu loyalists combed through important documents, diaries, and texts to compile *Azuma Kagami* in the late thirteenth century, it is probably they would have more records about the policy decisions of the Bakufu, and more knowledge of what happened behind closed doors. The *AK* selection is reproduced here:

At about the time of the sunset bell, Hōjō Tokifusa, Hōjō Yasutoki, Ōe Hiromoto, Miura Yoshimura, and Adachi Kagemori met to confer at Yoshitoki's house. Opinion was divided about the course to follow. Some wished to fortify the roads through Hakone and Ashigara and wait, but Hiromoto said, "Although such a course might serve temporarily, not all the eastern warriors are loyal to us. A prolonged defense of the passes would mean our defeat. We must trust to Heaven and send armies to Kyoto at once."

First of all, this discussion of war plans, even if it did not occur in this way, would be a most critical episode to highlight the effectiveness of the Bakufu leadership; it could not be left to a courtier's imagination. It seems likely that the *AK* compilers were content with their own version of what happened during the council of war, and no longer had any use for the almost naïve account of the *Rokudai* author—who imagined warriors setting out for a massive campaign without even conferring with each other.⁸⁶

I believe this second section of *AK* is more reliable as historical evidence, though it is still not free from bias. It makes sense that the Bakufu would have been divided on the issue of defensive or offensive war. There was no precedent for going on the offensive directly to Kyoto even in the days of Yoritomo, and considering how quickly they *were* able to march on Kyoto—and in discrete formations, as we will see in Chapter three—we would probably conclude that the decision was not haphazard or ad-hoc even if we had no textual evidence.⁸⁷ Such a drastic suggestion to attack Go-Toba would surely have been made against heavy opposition as well.

⁸⁶ However, this assumption on the part of the *Rokudai* author is very consistent with his depiction of the Bakufu warriors throughout his account.

⁸⁷ Yoritomo repeatedly refused to attack Kyoto directly. He only would march to Kyoto once as a symbolic show of force in 1185. See *Yoritomo and the Founding*, pp. 80-83 and *DKR*, pp. 3-4.

That said, there is in this debate a trope well-worn from classical East Asian literature—a lone, respectable voice remonstrating with a crowd—that inherently begs suspicion.

But if this second section in *AK* is more intriguing as historical evidence, why should we find the first section more reliable in *Rokudai Shōjiki*? Even if I have sufficiently argued that *Rokudai* was written first, and was the source text for the *AK* account of the speech itself and the warrior’s reaction, could the *Rokudai* author still be fabricating the scene? Certainly this is possible, and ultimately our ability to posit the exact details of historical events is problematic no matter how many sources of corroboration we have. However, the level of knowledge and interest courtiers had in the affairs of Kamakura make it likely that the *Rokudai* author was recording actual hearsay of what was going on in the east. As Martin Collcutt mentioned in his study of Masako, courtiers like Jien were always “alert for gossip” from the eastern provinces, and Jien reports what he hears about Kamakura in incredible detail.⁸⁸ Nor should we assume that hearsay and the Kyoto rumor-mill would were full of misinformation. Many times throughout his diary, Fujiwara Teika reports the rumors he hears about something controversial that happened in Kamakura, and his information is always accurate.⁸⁹ There was a strong network of courtiers who had personal, marital, and political connections to warriors, as we will see in later chapters, so it is quite likely that people in Kyoto heard of events like Masako’s speech without them having been too garbled.

Thus we come to the final category of analysis: to get a complete sense of what is at stake for these authors we need to look briefly at the cast of characters. First of all, Ōe Hiromoto makes his appearance here in the *Azuma Kagami* account as the wise counselor who criticizes the

⁸⁸ Collcutt, “Nun-Shogun,” p. 175. Also Huey, p. 7, where he says Jien was “such an interested party” that his insights are very important.

⁸⁹ See chapter two, section II. Also see *Meigetsuki*, 1205/i.7/26, where Teika hears very detailed rumors of Tokimasa’s revolt that are all accurate.

plan of defense. Hiromoto was an early supporter of Yoritomo's and his appearance here plays an important function. Like Masako, he is a member of the old guard and thus, like her speech, his suggestion to attack is a legitimizing seal of approval for what the Bakufu would end up doing. In fact, it seems likely from other sections that Yoshitoki already wanted an offensive strike on Go-Toba, so Hiromoto is giving full license to Yoshitoki while convincing others to support his plan. Judging from the wording, Hiromoto's suggestion is basically a condensed apologetic for why the Bakufu had to do what it did: "Although such a course might serve temporarily, not all the eastern warriors are loyal to us. A prolonged defense of the passes would mean our defeat. We must trust to Heaven and send armies to Kyoto at once." His short speech is an appeal to the reader as much as it is an appeal to the other characters in the story. This, I believe, is an example of *Azuma Kagami* using the role of trusted characters to bolster and justify the decisions of the Hōjō regency, an example of *AK*'s political bias.⁹⁰

Secondly, who is Adachi Kagemori? He is mentioned twice in the *Azuma Kagami* account of the speech. First, he is Masako's mouthpiece: "Masako spoke to them through Adachi Kagemori, the Vice-Governor of Akita Fortress," a comment not found in *Rokudai*. Then later in *AK* he is mentioned again as one of the select five men privy to the council of war. There are very few references to Kagemori in contemporary sources, however. References to his actions before 1221 can only be found in *Azuma Kagami*, and even that record is spotty at best.⁹¹ We know Kagemori began as a supporter of Minamoto no Yoriie. According to *AK* he committed acts of disloyalty twice, once by ignoring Yoriie's orders in 1199 and then again by leaving a post

⁹⁰ See modern scholarship, like Yamamoto Kōji, *Yoritomo no tenka sōsō*, pp. 190-191, where the literary elements of Hiromoto's remonstrance are taken completely at face value.

⁹¹ Kagemori seems to only appear in the documentary record after 1221, when he began acting with authority and dispensing jitō-ships; see *Kamakura ibun* documents from 1221/9/16 and 1221/10/29.

without notifying the Bakufu in 1212.⁹² He retired from the world to become a monk after Sanetomo's death in 1219, which seems to illustrate that his loyalty lay with the Minamoto shoguns and not the Hōjō.⁹³ But despite this ambivalent record he proved his loyalty to the Hōjō-led Bakufu by coming out of retirement to fight with the Tokaidō regiment in the Jōkyū Disturbance. Later on his daughter married Hōjō Tokiuji, and thus Kagemori gained the coveted role as maternal grandfather of Tokiuji's sons Tokiyori and Tsunetoki. These two grandsons of Kagemori would rule the Bakufu as powerful regents consecutively from 1243-1256. It is obvious, then, that *Azuma Kagami* would have a strong stake in retroactively bolstering Adachi Kagemori's role because it added legitimacy to the position of the late thirteenth-century Bakufu leadership—leadership that ordered the compilation of *AK* in the first place.

Here we see in *AK* the usage of certain characters (Kagemori, Hiromoto) to add legitimacy to the Bakufu leadership, accomplished by bolstering their roles in the narrative. There is also additional evidence against the historicity of some of *Azuma Kagami*'s claims about Kagemori in this scene: the other war tales do not mention him at all. Thus we need to look now at the three other extant texts that describe Masako's speech: the war tales *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*, *Rufubon Jōkyūki*, and *Maedabon Jōkyūki*.

Other Accounts and Insights

In the *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki* (1230s-1240s) version Masako's speech is divided equally between expounding on the suffering she has borne—losing Yoritomo and two sons, with her brother Yoshitoki now threatened—and then reminding the warriors of their obligations to

⁹² *AK* 1199/7/16-20: Yoriie wants to kill Kagemori and Masako supposedly saves his life, although this may be another example of inserting Masako positively into past accounts. The incident with the post is in *AK* 1212/7/28.

⁹³ The *Rokudai* author makes a negative comment that Kagemori still held strong concerns about the affairs of the world despite his Buddhist vows: Appendix, p. 238.

Kamakura. Afterwards, there is no discussion of whether to stage an offensive or defensive battle. In fact there is no hesitation about what to do; the great warriors meet up with Yoshitoki, pledge loyalty, and then decide to send an inflammatory response to Go-Toba claiming that their forces would be advancing shortly. The response, quite fascinatingly, is almost populist in its rhetoric, sarcastically asking if Go-Toba started the war because the numerous tax goods sent from the eastern provinces were not good enough for him! There is no debate over whether to attack or when to attack, only how to *phrase* the order of attack. In this section and in others, the top Bakufu leaders are Miura Yoshimura, the Hōjō leader Yoshitoki and his sons Yasutoki, Yoshiuji, and Yoshifune, his grandson Tomotoki, and a cadre of characters who have lesser roles in other texts, like Takeda Rokuro.⁹⁴ Adachi Kagemori is not given any leadership role.

In the *Rufubon Jōkyūki* (1240s), Masako's speech is longer, with about three quarters taken up by her sad history with a rousing explanation of how Yoshitoki was the only thing that kept her going. Only the last small section discusses the warriors' obligations to the Bakufu. Afterwards, the debate at the council of war is not whether to be defensive or offensive, but when to depart. Yoshitoki's son Yasutoki advocates waiting two or three days to get more warrior bands from further in the countryside, but Yoshitoki considers this a "despicable" thing to suggest. Instead he claims he is innocent and will simply trust in his karma by leaving at once—in other words, to let the battle be decided by fate and not by military strength.⁹⁵ In *Rufubon* more broadly, we may add, the major leaders of the Bakufu depicted are Miura Yoshimura, Chiba Tsunetane, and the Hōjō leader Yoshitoki and his sons Yasutoki, Yoshiuji, and Yoshifune. Adachi Kagemori is again not given any leadership role.

Finally, in the *Maedabon Jōkyūki* (1270s-1330s), Masako's speech is similar in content

⁹⁴ McCullough, "Shōkyūki: An Account of the Shōkyū War," pp. 207-209.

⁹⁵ *Rufubon*, sections 29 and 30.

with *Rufubon Jōkyūki*, but even more emotionally stirring. She ends her speech not only asking which side the warriors are on, but openly asking them to kill her first if they intend to follow Go-Toba's order. There is also a scene not duplicated in other sources where Masako gives out mementos of Yoritomo, such as ceremonial swords, to some of the warrior leaders. Here are examples of the later *Maedabon* adding extraneous, but intriguing, information. But in the council of war we see some parallels to *Azuma Kagami*. There is once more the suggestion of a defensive strategy around Ashigara and Hakone (although Miura Yoshimura, not Yasutoki, is the advocate of the plan). Ōe Hiromoto speaks out against the plan as in *AK*. Thus *Maedabon* and *AK* seem to be in agreement on two very important details from the council of war.⁹⁶ The main cast of characters, however, is the same as *Rufubon*, with Kagemori not in any leadership role.

In short, if we take a survey of all the warrior-based texts these events, there is agreement only on the following things: Masako gave a rousing speech reminding the warriors of their obligations to Kamakura. Then the warrior leaders pledged loyalty to the Bakufu and conferred about war plans with Yoshitoki in the lead. The war tales give us significant information about what was known about the Bakufu decision-making process in Kamakura and Japan more broadly. For if we take the *Azuma Kagami* account and compare it with the earliest two *Jōkyūki* tales (*Jikōjibon* and *Rufubon*) we see there is complete disagreement on what was being debated among the Bakufu leaders, but agreement that there *was* a debate. We saw that in *AK* the debate was between offensive and defensive war. In *Jikōjibon* the debate is what kind of response to send along with their offensive attack. And in *Rufubon*, the debate is not how to fight, but *when*. This is one of the areas where differences from texts are more promising than similarities. Since the two earliest war tales would have been written before the writers had access to *AK*, we can see that at least the idea that there *was* a debate was a detail known widely

⁹⁶ *Maedabon*, sections 29A-31A.

in Japan at this time—such knowledge could not be from mere textual borrowing.

Likewise we must not be tempted to see the final text, *Maedabon Jōkyūki*, as confirmation of the accuracy of the *AK* account even though they share many similarities in detail, like the debate over defense and Ōe Hiromoto's remonstrance. Since *Maedabon* was written after the period when *AK* was codified, this is most likely a case of textual borrowing from *AK* itself, not independent verification of *AK*'s details. In other words, Hiromoto only shows up in the war tales once *Maedabon Jōkyūki* could access the *AK* account. So rather than reflect that *AK* and *Maedabon* were privy to the same information, it reflects that *Maedabon* was most likely borrowing the details directly from *AK*.

I want to summarize some of the arguments made here. The first is that the *Azuma Kagami* compilers borrowed from *Rokudai Shōjiki* for its portrayal of Masako's speech and the warriors' emotional response. They condensed the account, adding details about the survival of the Bakufu. They then added in more loyal Bakufu figures (Kagemori, Hiromoto) into the story to justify Yoshitoki's decision and to add legitimacy to the later Hōjō regents. Second, the *Azuma Kagami* writers had their own information suggesting the debate in the council of war was between defensive and offensive war. However, they dramatized this debate by giving Ōe Hiromoto the role of wise counselor to justify the Bakufu's decision. And though other warrior-centered sources disagreed on the kind of debate it was, their agreement that there *was* a debate indicates there was some kind of inside knowledge or rumors about the Bakufu's strategy that circulated more broadly in Kamakura. Finally, the *Rokudai* author's version of Masako's speech may indicate some naiveté about how warriors departed in battle, but the fact that he records the speech only a few years later reflects real hearsay that must have occurred at the capital, giving substantial reason to think the speech happened.

These, I believe, are new pieces of information that we could not have gleaned without a

sustained, in-depth investigation of the complexity of textual borrowing and each text's unique personal and political bias. If we had only conglomerated details from these texts together, as some Japanese scholars do, or only trusted *Azuma Kagami*, as many English-language scholars do, we would come up with a much more problematic picture of what happened.

The Speech in Early 20th Century-Scholarship

To get a sense of why this kind of analysis is so important, let us step forward and briefly look at an example of how Masako's speech was characterized by an influential early twentieth-century historian. Scottish journalist James Murdoch was one of the first English-language historians who set out to write a survey history of Japan. The following is from his *History of Japan: From the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 A.D* (published 1910):

On learning of how matters stood, the Lady Masa [*sic*] at once summoned five or six of the Kamakura leaders into her presence. Her words were brief, but stirring and to the point, and when she wound up by telling them that if any among them had thoughts of taking part with Kyōto, now was the time to say so clearly, they all professed their steadfast devotion with tears in their eyes. They were thereupon dismissed to hold a council of war. In this, opinion was all but unanimous in favor of shutting the Ashigara and Hakone barriers, standing on the defensive, and awaiting the course of events. Against this Ōe Hiromoto alone protested vehemently, and later on Miyoshi Yasunobu, who was not then present, urged a prompt and vigorous offensive; and it was the counsels of these sturdy old patriarchs that were approved of by Masako.⁹⁷

It should be clear that the information Murdoch presents as history actually comes solely from the *AK* version of the story of Masako's speech quoted above. The bulk of the story he gets from the *AK* entry for 1221/5/19, and the reference to Yasunobu (also known by his religious

⁹⁷ Murdoch, *History of Japan, Part I*, p. 443.

name Zenshin) from a later entry, 1221/5/21.⁹⁸ All of the elements of the *AK* account are here. Masako's speech, though summarized, replicates her challenge to the Bakufu to speak out if they wish to defect. Murdoch also replicates the warrior's tear-filled response and focuses in on the council of war scene. He explains both the defensive plan and Ōe Hiromoto's remonstrance against it, lumping in reference to Yasunobu's later similar advice.

Of course, despite the close connection to *AK*, Murdoch is still playing a bit loose with his source. For example, that there were "five or six" Kamakura leaders he infers from the fact that five leaders are presented by name in the group that assembles for Masako and a slightly different group of five is listed in the council of war with Yoshitoki (accounting for overlap, a total of six different individuals named in *AK*).⁹⁹ Murdoch ignores a statement at the beginning that unnamed others were also present. He also displays his usual penchant for hyperbole by shifting the tone from the original phrase "opinion was divided," (意見區分) to "opinion was all but unanimous" to dramatize Hiromoto's remonstrance. Murdoch has essentially condensed the *AK* account, preserving and emphasizing the most emotionally stirring moments of the original.

His tone clearly shows identification with and admiration for the Bakufu warriors. Murdoch's language betrays his sympathies: whether calling Masako's speech "stirring," recounting the warriors' "steadfast devotion," or referring to Hiromoto and Zenshin warmly as "sturdy old patriarchs." But it would be unfair to continue criticizing a scholar who was working

⁹⁸ The second passage, in McCullough's translation: "Today there were more policy discussions, the result of new objections to the decision previously taken... Masako however decided to consult the aged and infirm Buddhist Lay Priest Zenshin, who was living in retirement. 'This is a critical hour for the Kanto,' said Zenshin. 'I do not think the decision should be left to a general council. Despite their pleas it would be negligence indeed to delay sending warriors to Kyoto. Dispatch one commander in chief ahead of the others.' 'Two counsels and a single plan! The gods and buddhas must be on our side,' said Yoshitoki."

⁹⁹ Hōjō Tokifusa, Hōjō Yasutoki, Adachi Kagemori, and Ōe Hiromoto are mentioned in both scenes. Ashikaga Yoshiuji is mentioned only in audience to the speech, while Miura Yoshimura is mentioned only in the council of war.

under very different intellectual conditions and academic standards than we hold today. Thus beyond the elements of older scholarship that seem subjective and dated today, I merely want to highlight two issues that are significant about Murdoch's use of the *Azuma Kagami* and which have relevance for scholars still working today. In the first case, his lack of distance from the tone and details of his source restrict him from seeing the productive elements of his text—that all writers are engaged in actively shaping and re-shaping meaning in their works, and very personal or political reasons can lie behind the choices made in a text's content and style. From the interpretation of the *Azuma Kagami* as political propaganda for the Hōjō regency, Murdoch has been taken in hook, line, and sinker.

The second point relates to historical interpretation and significance. Because Murdoch relies exclusively on the *AK* version of events, his interpretation of their significance is correspondingly one-sided. Murdoch's adoption of Hiromoto's remonstrance plays a huge role in his analysis of the Jōkyū Disturbance—later he calls the decision of the council of war “momentous” and credits Hiromoto's bravery as saving the Bakufu from certain destruction by Go-Toba.¹⁰⁰ But beyond that, Murdoch's use of *Azuma Kagami*—and a historiography drawn from *AK* and other warrior-centered sources by Japanese scholars—leads him to see Go-Toba's war as a failed reactionary plot, much the way Varley viewed Go-Daigo's restoration movement. In Murdoch, who was presenting the history of Japan to many western readers for the first time, we see one of the starting points the traditional approach to medieval Japan I introduced earlier in this chapter.

The illustration of my close analysis of sources above surely clarifies why older approaches like Murdoch's are problematic for the study of history. But keeping in mind the

¹⁰⁰ Murdoch, p. 447.

trajectory of Jeffrey Mass and more recent scholarship on medieval Japan, I hope that my illustration also has shown some of the advantages of embracing, in a new way, many of the so-called literary sources that have been absent from recent historical studies. If one had to approach this topic with information from documentary evidence alone, nothing could be said at all about Masako's speech, the council of war, or the significance of different characters in the narrative. Thus, in the following pages I hope to use this broader repository of texts to investigate the Jōkyū Disturbance and the historical processes that intersected with it.

Conclusions

What have we learned about medieval Japanese historiography and approaches to sources in this chapter?

- 1) Historians from the nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the Kamakura period as an age of warrior dominance, overturning the elite aristocracy of the Heian period, but this theory was based on problematic usage of more aesthetic texts.
- 2) Jeffrey Mass and more recent scholars have redefined the Kamakura period as a continuation of Heian society with dual rule by warriors and courtiers. In the process of adopting a more documentary approach to history, Mass and his cohort rejected the value of texts on the literary end of the spectrum, though they have tended to use the *Azuma Kagami* as a basic timeline of events.
- 3) The wide range of sources on medieval Japan, including diaries, documents, tales, chronicles, and anecdotes, can give us great insight into history—but only if we are willing to confront issues of historicity as well as literary style.

In evaluating texts for historical information, we cannot either reject sections because of exaggeration and fictive elements, nor can we mine texts for information without attention to

their textual development and context. As I hope I have shown, the most incidental moments, such as the parallelism of a phrase, a brief mention of a character, or minor differences in detail, can often suggest very wide-ranging conclusions about bias, views of the past, and source reliability. But beyond that, when we are willing to confront different types of sources historically, we can see a multiplicity of voices from the past, challenging some of our attempts to survey and summarize historical trends. We can also see, as with the significance of loyal advisors in the *Azuma Kagami* narrative, that the *manner* in which events are portrayed are not merely aesthetic choices, but could have been matters of political or ideological life or death for the authors or compilers who wrote the texts we have today.

Chapter 2 – Japan on the Eve of the Jōkyū Disturbance

The Shock of the Jōkyū Disturbance

Sometime between 1222 and 1224, a courtier in Kyoto wrote down the following introduction to his historical work *Rokudai Shōjiki*, including an explanation of why he decided to draft his own version of recent events.

In the past I was one who attended court under the glow of the moon of the Chrysanthemum Pavilion, but now, hidden under the clouds of the Lotus Platform, I am one who has rejected the world. I was born during the sagely age of Ōhō (1161-63), and began to serve the court during Takakura's enlightened time. Since then I have grown old, and now more than 60 years have passed. During my life I have seen the court rites revised and changed many times, and seven emperors have taken the throne.

When Emperor Rokujō was on the throne I was very young, but from the Angen era (1175-1177) down until the Jōō era of today (1222-1224) I have seen and heard many things—though events have been so bewildering I sometimes wonder if they were all a dream. But once I resolved myself to my vows without hesitation, I changed my appearance and dyed my robes, placing my trust in Amida and my hope in the Pure Land. Since that time I have rejected the things of the world and have long since hidden away all my previous writings.

But then I was shocked out of complacency by the thunder of the storm that hit us so suddenly, plunging the world into darkness. I began to collect and rewrite all of the scattered bits of information I could still remember about what has happened. My aspirations are to combine the two Buddhist paths, comprehend good and evil causation, pass down knowledge from Chinese and Japanese texts, and advise about good and bad government. I want to take some of these examples of good and bad government from recent times, and present them so that later generations of ministers can learn from them. I do not do this for myself; I write these things down for the benefit of the people and the benefit of the realm.¹

What had “plunged the world into darkness” was the defeat of retired emperor Go-Toba in the Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221. For the author, Jōkyū was sufficiently shocking to pull him out of his monastic life and the commitments that go along with it—namely, disregard for worldly matters. He was brought back to an interest in secular life by his desire to explain what happened, in the hope that future generations would learn from the mistakes of his own time.

¹ Appendix, p. 224.

The *Rokudai* author frames his statement of purpose by taking care to illustrate his own life circumstances; that he had rejected the world, and now had at his disposal only haphazard writings left from his days as a court attendant. The sense of humility injected here serves multiple purposes, though they may only be evident to an unsympathetic reader. On the one hand, emphasizing his lack of preparation and the abruptness of his efforts shields him from excessive criticism, as when someone giving a speech might imply his remarks are spontaneous even when they are not. If a statement is made without too much planning and care, occasional lapses in quality, judgment or memory can be forgiven. But ironically, the author's humility also elevates the value of his work by shifting focus to the text's noble goals instead of its (potentially) self-serving writer. By stating that he is only interested in writing his work "for the benefit of the people and the benefit of the realm," he is trying to make his words transcend the particularities of his own life and enter the purview of right and wrong, a moral lesson for all time. Both of these aspects of humility are highly conventional in traditional East Asian political writing, but here they are nonetheless clearly written with personal fervor.

I wish to focus not on speculation over the author's motives or self-representation, but instead on the very real and tangible sense of *shock* that punctuates his introduction. He says that some of the events leading up to his retirement to the clergy were indeed quite upsetting, using the common *wabun* trope that grief and sadness make one feel as if in a dream instead of reality. But by comparison the most recent shock of Jōkyū is a storm that hits suddenly and blocks the sun, a force that awakens one with fear instead of lulling into a confused melancholia. This storm

imagery was *not* a common way for a thirteenth-century Japanese writer to describe a painful event.² The shock would have jumped off the page.

To understand what the Jōkyū Disturbance meant to the people of the thirteenth century, we have to recapture this sense of surprise and dismay; to see why it is qualitatively different from the sadness and confusion that other wars and disputes that the recent past had evoked. The answer lies not only in the events of the Jōkyū Disturbance itself, but also in the hopes and insecurities of the pre-Jōkyū interwar age. To fully comprehend the sadness and shock of the Jōkyū Disturbance, we have to look at sources which bridge the divide—texts by authors who experienced both the earlier period of Genpei turmoil and the hopeful peace of the early 1200s.

In this venture we need to turn again to the texts I introduced in chapter one. Their usefulness is broader than just a repository of different depictions of the Jōkyū Disturbance. In fact, in almost every case, these texts ground their discussion of the recent Jōkyū tragedy in an historical narrative that begins long before. For Jien, the story begins with the founding of the Japanese state by the legendary Emperor Jimmu! But for most of the narrative texts, the story begins somewhere in the conflicts of the twelfth century, the conflicts that gave rise to Minamoto Yoritomo and the Kamakura Bakufu. Regardless of whether they all had personally lived through the beginning of these conflicts, the authors and compilers of these texts clearly understood the import of these events and interpreted the situation of their own time in light of them.

Many of these sources are in fact wrestling with a deep historical problem. Namely, how does Go-Toba's failure make sense in the scheme of what came before? In the way these texts recall the late twelfth and early-thirteenth century period of relative peace, they may not be

² Interestingly, one other text, *Kaidōki*, uses similar storm imagery to refer to Jōkyū, *SNKBT* 31, p. 91. Yuge Shigeru claims this imagery is coming from astrological associations with a day of battle (p. 11), but both the *Rokudai* and *Kaidōki* authors are using it more symbolically for an unusually upsetting period of change.

factually accurate in every way. Still, we can see what this era *meant* to people who lived through both of the monumental events on either side of it. And by recapturing courtier and warrior voices on the eve of 1221, these texts can help us answer the basic question: what exactly was so shocking about the Jōkyū Disturbance?

I. The Legacy of Yoritomo

If we are to understand the Jōkyū disturbance fully, not only how and why it happened, but why it was so shocking, our story has to begin with Minamoto no Yoritomo. Perhaps the most important figure of the twelfth century, Yoritomo was the military leader who unified his disparate Minamoto clan, defeated the Taira clan in the Genpei War, founded the warrior government we call the Kamakura Bakufu, and eventually set up a system of land stewards and provincial governors that stabilized the classical Japanese state.³

As I posited in the introduction, Yoritomo rose to power by taking advantage of the mistakes the Taira had made asserting their political perks in the capital. He was indeed a visionary, but he also benefited from the sheer blessing of good timing. With Prince Mochihito's call to arms in 1180, Yoritomo saw that resentment at court was starting to turn against the Taira. Instead of pre-empting the situation, however, he would wait in Kamakura, solidifying his position among other eastern families, keeping surveillance on the Taira and the court, and sending his relatives to the west to do most of the actual fighting for him.⁴ Ironically, once each of these Minamoto family members had been successful in battles against the Taira, they soon became a threat to Yoritomo himself. His cousin Yoshinaka, his uncle Yukiie, and his half-brother

³ The authoritative treatment of Yoritomo's accomplishments is Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan* (hereafter "Yoritomo and the Founding").

⁴ See *Yoritomo and the Founding*, pp. 80-81.

Yoshitsune would all play decisive roles in defeating the Taira. But they would each in time face Yoritomo's wrath for either betraying him outright, or for accepting court honors and privileges suggesting their preeminence over him, which to him amounted to the same thing.⁵

Though the basic outline of Yoritomo's rise to power was well known at the time, courtier and warrior-centered texts are nearly unanimous in their praise and positive approval of him. We will first turn to the portrayals of Yoritomo in sources of warrior provenance.

Warrior views of Yoritomo

The most important text on the life of Minamoto Yoritomo is perhaps also the most biased. Scholars generally agree that the early portions of *Azuma Kagami*, namely those that deal with Yoritomo's life and the early history of the Bakufu, are actually freer from political bias than the second half, which actively expunges flaws and any mention of private lives from the later-generation Hōjō leaders.⁶ Even so, the *Azuma Kagami* (or *AK*) depictions of Yoritomo are rife with positive tropes lauding his military prowess and his charismatic leadership. Though *AK* is ostensibly formatted as a chronicle, episodes on certain days are written with a literary flair, as Yoritomo verbally spars with traitors, magnanimously heeds the remonstrance of loyal underlings, and goes above and beyond the bravery and skill of an ordinary man.⁷ Here are just a few examples:

[Even in retreat] time and time again Yoritomo himself, whose arrows found their mark with unerring accuracy, ordered his own conveyance toward the enemy so that he might join in the fray. Without fail His Lordship's arrows—

⁵ Ibid., pp.80-85 and pp. 127-28.

⁶ Minoru Shinoda, *The Founding of the Kamakura Shogunate*, p. 11.

⁷ For some additional examples not given below, see 1180/11/8 where Yoritomo heeds the remonstrance of a young upstart, and 1184/1/17, where Yoritomo regrets executing an innocent man and prays for him in the afterlife.

shaft and feathers—buried themselves in their mark and killed many an enemy.⁸

Seeing that Toshikane, who has always been addicted to ostentation, was dressed in a most fashionable manner, wearing ten wadded silk garments and a skirt of many colors, Yoritomo asked for Toshikane's sword. Yoritomo, taking the sword in his own hands, cut off Toshikane's skirt, saying, "You are a very gifted man, but why are you not more thrifty and simple in your ways?... You do not realize how wasteful you are of your wealth. It is excessive." Toshikane had nothing to say, and hung his head respectfully. Yoritomo then asked him whether he intended to give up his ostentatious ways, to which Toshikane replied that he would. At the time Oe Hiromoto and Fujiwara Kunimichi were nearby, and they were greatly astonished.⁹

Thus [defecting Taira] Hirotune had come to Yoritomo, outwardly professing submission but inwardly prepared to betray him. But Hirotune, who had expected Yoritomo to welcome him and his large force, was stunned at being reprimanded instead by Yoritomo for reporting late. Completely dominated by Yoritomo, Hirotune relinquished any thought of revolt and resolved instead to serve Yoritomo.¹⁰

In this last episode Yoritomo demonstrates his commitment to honor and duty, as he berates Taira Hirotune for arriving late to his summons instead of fawning over Hirotune's large force—20,000 according to *AK*—a force that would drastically aid Yoritomo's fledgling cause.¹¹ Ironically, precisely because he is a stickler for obedience and is above being bribed by the gift of large manpower, he manages to completely win over this new duplicitous vassal, it seems, by sheer force of character. In these selections Yoritomo comes across as a leader with effortless authority, inspiring devotion and obedience in all he meets.

⁸ *AK* 1180/8/24. Translation by Shinoda, p. 166. If not specified, other *AK* translations are my own.

⁹ *AK* 1184/11/21. Translation by Shinoda, p. 280.

¹⁰ *AK* 1180/9/19. Translation by Shinoda, p. 179. The phrase "completely dominated by Yoritomo" might be more literally translated, "[He saw] Yoritomo was truly a leader of others." 殆叶人主之躰也

¹¹ For the issue of exaggeration of numbers in *AK*, see Gomi Fumihiko, *Azuma kagami no hoho*, p. 80.

It is true that episodes showing Yoritomo's flaws and mistakes still exist in *Azuma Kagami*, as Japanese scholars have pointed out.¹² However, what stand out overall are his intractable leadership, his prescience and political acumen, and his charisma, as if endowed with supernatural uniqueness. The above and other incidents, especially those with climactic action or detailed dialogue, resonate with literary tropes of proper military leadership long taught from Chinese classics and more recent Japanese war tales. Scholars of religion would also see in these episodes parallels to East Asian hagiographic literature, the biographies of saints and sages. Indeed, these literary episodes in *AK* are imbued with an almost reverential tone.

Then again, in the case of *Azuma Kagami* a positive assessment of Yoritomo was much more than a literary love affair; it was a matter of political life and death. The entire legitimacy of the Hōjō regency depended on Yoritomo's accomplishments and the structures he enacted, and just as importantly, in drawing those accomplishments into an unbroken line leading to the current Hōjō regime.¹³ Even when the text was being compiled almost a century later, the Hōjō had to emphasize the positive legacy of Yoritomo's accomplishments, so the glowing portrait of him in these selections is unsurprising.¹⁴

The power of Yoritomo's legacy is palpable throughout the other warrior-centered narratives as well. As a military leader bar none, he captured the imaginations of warriors and bards alike. His valor and success in defeating the Taira led to an explosion of war-tale literature, which fostered sympathy for the Minamoto and the bravery of warrior clans in general. The variations of the war tale *Jōkyūki*, though dealing almost exclusively with events from the 1200s,

¹² See for example episodes on 1182/6/9, where Yoritomo takes a concubine, and 1184/4/21 where he has his son-in-law killed.

¹³ Shinoda, pp. 10-11.

¹⁴ As Jeffrey Mass said in *Antiquity and Anachronism*, Yoritomo had to be given first attribution for any innovation of the Kamakura period, and in some cases beyond; pp. 53-54.

nevertheless still resonate with respect for Yoritomo in their brief accounts of his accomplishments.

[Yoritomo] imposed his authority upon the whole empire and spread his fame to every quarter of the country, subduing the land as far as the Nine Provinces and Two Islands in the West, and to Akuro, Tsukaru, and Ezo Island in the East.¹⁵ –*Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*

Around the spring and summer of Genryaku 2, 1185, Yoritomo succeeded in defeating the Heike and brought peace for 13 years, and after ruling the world for 19 or 20 years he passed away on the 13th day of the 1st month of Shoji 1, 1199.¹⁶ –*Maedabon Jōkyūki*

What stands out from the warrior views of Yoritomo is a sense of destiny, a picture of a charismatic leader bringing the whole world under his sway. The scope of Yoritomo's achievements in these texts is inspiring but exaggerated. To say that Yoritomo “imposed his authority upon the whole empire” or was “ruling the world” may not accurately describe the particularities of the system he was enacting, but it does give us a strong picture of how he was seen in the early 13th century. Yoritomo had indeed brought peace to Japan after several decades of instability, and it is not surprising that warrior-centered texts laud this accomplishment with all-encompassing language. As we will see in chapter five, particularly later generations in which warrior society had grown in power and scope would naturally see in Yoritomo's achievements the genesis of the world they knew or desired for themselves.

Courtier views of Yoritomo

¹⁵ McCoullough, “Shokyuki,” p. 175.

¹⁶ *Maedabon*, section 3A.

It makes sense that the warrior-centered texts paint an almost millenarian picture of Yoritomo's accomplishments, ambitions, and personal character traits. But when we look at the court-centered sources, we might anticipate a different picture of his place in history, one in which his accomplishments are at the expense of the court aristocracy and in which he should be treated with some resentment and hostility. As work by Jeffrey Mass and others have indicated, the Bakufu's soldiers were drawing revenues away from the court by their appointments to land rights as jitō, and often acted outrageously in their posts.¹⁷ In terms of Yoritomo's actions as well, Mass has also indicated the military leader's policy of rejecting accolades and court ranks was not a sign of his frugality and noble-mindedness, but part of a larger attempt to maintain his autonomy while allowing him to "compete as an equal with the older elite."¹⁸ Thus we should expect that courtiers greeted Yoritomo's rise to prominence with resentment and discouragement.

Yet, surprisingly, the truth is quite the opposite. Admiration for Yoritomo flows through the court-based texts just as strongly as the warrior-centered ones. The author of *Rokudai Shōjiki* lauds:

Yoritomo promoted the Buddha Law with his patronage and maintained the Way of Kingship with his support and obedience to the throne. He resisted extravagance in his own clan and soothed the worries of tens of thousands. He demoted the disloyal and promoted men of service. He showed absolutely no favoritism and did not treat people based on their kinship or closeness to him.¹⁹

In the *Gukanshō*, Jien echoes similar praise:

[Yoritomo] was appointed Senior Commander of the Imperial Bodyguards of the Right on the 24th day of that month and, on the same day, went to the

¹⁷ *Yoritomo and the Founding*, pp. 233-235.

¹⁸ *DKR*, p. 6.

¹⁹ Appendix, pp. 231-232.

palace to express his gratitude for the appointment. Then he resigned from both positions... He might have had any position, even that of a minister, but he reflected on the meaning of such appointments and conducted himself in a praiseworthy manner. He was really a rare man to be Shogun in the final [imperial] reigns and a man of superior ability!²⁰

The focus is on Yoritomo's humility as a servant of the people. In other words, Yoritomo is being cast as the classical Confucian ruler, who resists personal accolades and wealth to devote his abilities solely to the task of governance. The *Rokudai* selection especially is permeated with accepted Confucian wisdom about politics, most obviously in reference to demoting and promoting others based on merit instead of personal ties. Even Jien's comments evoke similar Confucian territory when he calls Yoritomo a "man of superior ability." Confronted with a leader who does not take all he can get, our educated courtiers waste no time in matching Yoritomo to their own expectations of a upright sagely ruler.

Of course, we must not be impressionable enough to think the comments above are accurate descriptions of historical fact. Jeffrey Mass' work on the demographics of the Kamakura regime would suggest that Yoritomo was not free from favoritism, since he worked consistently through the end of his life to uproot *jito* and *shugo* disobedient to him and replace them with easterners—people from established families he knew he could trust.²¹ So to a certain extent Yoritomo did play favorites and was eminently concerned with his own interests, even if he showed a remarkable level of subtlety and restraint in his use of power. Moreover, these courtier comments about humility and favoritism reflect very conventional ideas from Confucian moral discourse. But though I can posit that these writers were perhaps too charitable when it came to Yoritomo's motives, it would be wrong to suppose that their praise of him casts no new light on the question of why Yoritomo was so admired and respected among courtiers. For one, both

²⁰ Brown and Ishida, *The Future and the Past*, pp. 153-54.

²¹ See *Yoritomo and the Founding*, pp. 146-150.

authors zero in on his support of the throne. It is Yoritomo's attitude, just as much as his actions, that is admirable to them: his "support" and "obedience," his "gratitude" and "praiseworthy manner." By not squabbling for ranks and perks Yoritomo passes the courtier litmus test by showing deference to the court and the imperial family.

Moreover, in the background of these comments about Yoritomo's selflessness and respect for the throne—Jien a bit later even refers to Yoritomo as "a jewel for the Imperial House"—we can glean an unspoken comparison with the only other military leader to rise so far politically: Taira no Kiyomori. Kiyomori's rise to power in the mid-twelfth century was marked by a considerable tendency *not* to turn down court ranks and titles, and this direct political competition with the established aristocracy cost him much of his support in the capital.²² In addition to criticizing Kiyomori's love of court ranks, both *Rokudai Shōjiki* and *Gukanshō* also point out the Taira's mistreatment of religious institutions and the retired emperor himself, which may explain why it mattered so much that Yoritomo "promoted the Buddha Law" and acted with respect to the throne.²³

At times the comparison between Kiyomori and Yoritomo in these texts becomes more explicit. *Rokudai Shōjiki*'s praise of Yoritomo is in fact a direct rhetorical reversal of one of its criticisms of Kiyomori. At one point *Rokudai* discusses Kiyomori's rise to power by skewering him with a humorous bait-and-switch: "Ten thousand did he subjugate; ten thousand did he

²² Conventional criticism in English has claimed Kiyomori's failure was not expanding his ambitions beyond political success at the capital. However, Ishii Susumu argues for the novelty of Kiyomori's reign by looking at his consolidation of the Taira family, his extra-legal powers, and his utilization of trade and foreign relations in *Nihon Tsushi, chusei* 1, pp.44-50. Mass reevaluates the Taira legacy on pp. 13-36 of *Yoritomo and the Founding*, mostly adhering to the view that Kiyomori's reign was not very innovative; however, Wayne Farris follows Ishii's line of thinking in *Heavenly Warriors*.

²³ See *Rokudai*'s treatment of Shigehira and the burning of Todaiji; tr. p.8; Jien says the attacks on the temple at Nara were "disgusting." Brown and Ishida, p. 128; he later approves of Yoritomo's reasoning that executing Shigehira was destroying "Buddha's enemies." 佛ノ御敵

aggravate.”²⁴ Here the author idiosyncratically upsets the conventional parallelism of Chinese-influenced prose, which normally repeats synonymous or similar phrases for totalistic effect. Instead of repetition he makes the second phrase an explicitly negative contrast to the first (which is at worst a neutral depiction of power). Compare the idea of aggravating ten thousand with the above paragraph about Yoritomo: he has instead “soothed the worries of tens of thousands.” The damage of Kiyomori has been undone, and the accompanying sense of relief is palpable.

On the one hand, perhaps there is a hint of possessiveness hidden in the praise of the pro-Yoritomo courtier bloc: Yoritomo is a good warrior leader because he stays in his own sphere and leaves ours alone.²⁵ If we were just looking at the issue of rejecting courtly rank, such an interpretation would be reasonable. However, if the contrast between Yoritomo and Kiyomori was seen to have serious political and social ramifications—such as whether their policies “soothed the worries” of the masses—then we may get a different spin on Yoritomo’s success with the court. To these writers, Yoritomo’s deference toward court hierarchy was not a mere token of civility to hide an ulterior political agenda of autonomy and vassal privilege. Instead, his actions at court and in the provinces were seen as two sides of the same benevolent rule. To put it differently, the modesty he showed toward personal aristocratic rewards was tied to, or symbolic of, his ability to publicly control his own men and provide security for the masses outside the courtly sphere. Further, courtiers like Jien and the *Rokudai* author admired that Yoritomo maintained his independence, without any hint that this independence somehow threatened court authority—an idea that goes against the implications of Mass’ interpretation.

²⁴ Appendix, p. 226. In the original: 万坊をしたがへて、万民をなやます

²⁵ See the discussion of courtier disapproval of Sanetomo in section IV, which is the other side of this issue.

Nor should we think that Yoritomo is merely the lesser of two evils in the depictions of these courtiers. If that were the case, courtier praise would be restricted to mere condescending approval about how Yoritomo stayed in his place, did not seek ranks and perks, and was not destructive like Kiyomori. In fact, what stands out from courtier praise of Yoritomo is that he was being evaluated, and positively appraised, not just by how he measured up to courtier values and expectations, but by how he measured up on his own terms as a warrior leader. In this the court writers are every bit as laudatory as the war tales, even regarding Yoritomo's battle prowess:

Yoritomo rose up like a violent wind from the southeast, blowing the ashes of the scorched earth. And when his army blew against the great cloud of warriors arising from the northwest, men and horses of the enemy both lost their way. Thus with force of only a thousand or so Yoritomo defeated an army of tens of thousands. This is truly a kind of power given from above.²⁶ —*Rokudai Shōjiki*

Because Yoritomo did not once remove the bowstring from his bow—or permit his bow to be taken from him—after he left Kamakura to engage the enemy in battle, even his retainers stood in great awe of him. As for Yoritomo's physical strength, when hunting he would have his horse run alongside a big deer, and then he would grab the deer's horns and bring it down with his bare hands.²⁷ —*Gukanshō*

Like his autonomy in the east and his respect for the throne, Yoritomo's leadership of his men and his military prowess were all seen as part of his overall effectiveness as a leader: a consistent, benevolent ruler who “reflected on the meaning” of his decisions, to quote Jien earlier. Yoritomo's qualities of restraint and deference to the throne would have meant little were it not for his contribution to the state: ending the twelfth century conflicts and providing law and

²⁶ Appendix, p. 227.

²⁷ Brown and Ishida, p. 148-49.

order in the provinces. Time and time again courtier and warrior-based sources dwell on Yoritomo's military success at pacifying the country, or as the Rokudai author puts it, "calming the stormy waves in the western sea."²⁸ Indeed, the gratitude toward his achievement of peace comes across like a collective sigh of relief.

Conclusions

The sources may disagree on the extent of Yoritomo's control—the warrior texts emphasize the expansiveness of his political subjugation, while the court texts emphasize his restraint—but they share a remarkable degree of agreement on *who* Yoritomo was and why he was a good leader. For both courtier and warrior authors who survived the Jōkyū Disturbance, what stood out were Yoritomo's decisive leadership, his political acuity, his respect for the throne, and his military prowess in securing peace for Japan. It was this overwhelmingly positive legacy that stayed in the minds of our authors even decades after Yoritomo's death in 1199. Throughout the challenges that lay ahead for both the court and the warrior government, the example of Yoritomo would remain a potent image, an ideal ruler who "calmed the seas" and protected people both high and low. The biggest challenge for the Bakufu leadership in Kamakura was whether they could continue to stay the beneficiaries of that legacy, or whether someone else would rise to claim it.

II. Internal Conflict: Court Division

²⁸ Appendix, p. 231. The "stormy waves in the western sea" stands specifically for defeating the Taira.

Throughout the war years, the only person in Yoritomo's way that he could not effectively anticipate or control was retired emperor Go-Shirakawa. A relatively young man during the Hōgen and Heiji disturbances, Go-Shirakawa had learned how to manipulate warrior groups against each other, and except for a few missteps, was constantly undermining the strength of each warrior faction by periodically switching his allegiance and support.²⁹ Throughout the 1180s both Yoritomo and Go-Shirakawa tread a fine line by trying to assert their own prerogatives without provoking an outright showdown.³⁰ It was only with Go-Shirakawa's death in 1192 that Yoritomo was able to assert himself more openly in court affairs, finally getting the appointment as Shogun in the 7th month of 1192.³¹ In fact, some Japanese scholars take this date, and not 1185, as the founding of the Kamakura Bakufu, and thus the true start of the Kamakura period.

However, Yoritomo's freedom in governmental affairs was brief, as he died unexpectedly in 1199. So with Yoritomo and Go-Shirakawa both gone by the end of the twelfth century, the Bakufu and the court had suddenly lost their most visible and effective leaders. What followed was a time that Jeffrey Mass termed the period of "looking inward." By this he meant instead of conflict between court and Bakufu, both institutions were suffering from internal conflicts as each dealt with factionalism and crises of legitimacy. Court-Bakufu relations were peaceful, but precisely because of the discord *within* each regime that could no longer be

²⁹ A third generation patron of the Taira, Go-Shirakawa used his connection with Taira Kiyomori to escape from the Heiji disturbance, but eventually grew wary of his ally. Once the Taira fled the capital Go-Shirakawa began to favor different Minamoto generals, briefly supporting Kiso Yoshinaka before turning on him in a plot that failed in the Battle of Hojuji in 1183. Finally, Go-Shirakawa favored Yoshitsune to counterbalance Yoritomo. See Kouchi Shōsuke, *Nihon chusei no chotei-bakufu taisei*, pp. 37-38; Hurst, *Insei*, pp. 205-210; and *DKR*, p. 4.

³⁰ As Mass points out, Yoritomo was reluctant to mobilize his troops again so soon, and feared Go-Shirakawa might once more support Yoshitsune, who was still on the run. *DKR*, pp. 4-8 detail the relations between Yoritomo, Go-Shirakawa, and Kujo Kanezane during this period.

³¹ Hurst, "The Kōbu Polity," in *Court and Bakufu*, p. 10. Though Yoritomo's resurgence came at the eventual cost of his alliance with the Kujō. See below.

ignored.³² It is as if the tensions within the court bureaucracy and the Bakufu chain of command, long-repressed by the weight of these dominant figures, were suddenly released like a spring.

In fact, a superficial survey of the events leading up to 1221 might make one wonder how the 1200-1220 period could be seen as peaceful at all. Kamakura was rife with violence in these decades, as the Hōjō and their allies exterminated various pretenders to the Bakufu leadership, not to mention Yoritomo's own sons being assassinated fifteen years apart. On the court side, the squabbles remained bloodless, but it is true that bitter infighting among court factions only escalated after about 1196. We will first investigate this period of internal conflict at the court in Kyoto, leaving the Bakufu's struggles for section III.

The Fujiwara Split and “The Great Shuffle”

The Northern branch of the Fujiwara family had enjoyed unparalleled success as leaders of the court aristocracy since the early Heian period. But as we saw in the introduction, the Hōgen and Heiji uprisings would have divisive effects on the regents' house. By siding with Go-Shirakawa, Fujiwara Tadamichi was able to survive as head of the Fujiwara clan despite attempts by his father and brother to supplant him during the Hōgen disturbance of 1156.³³

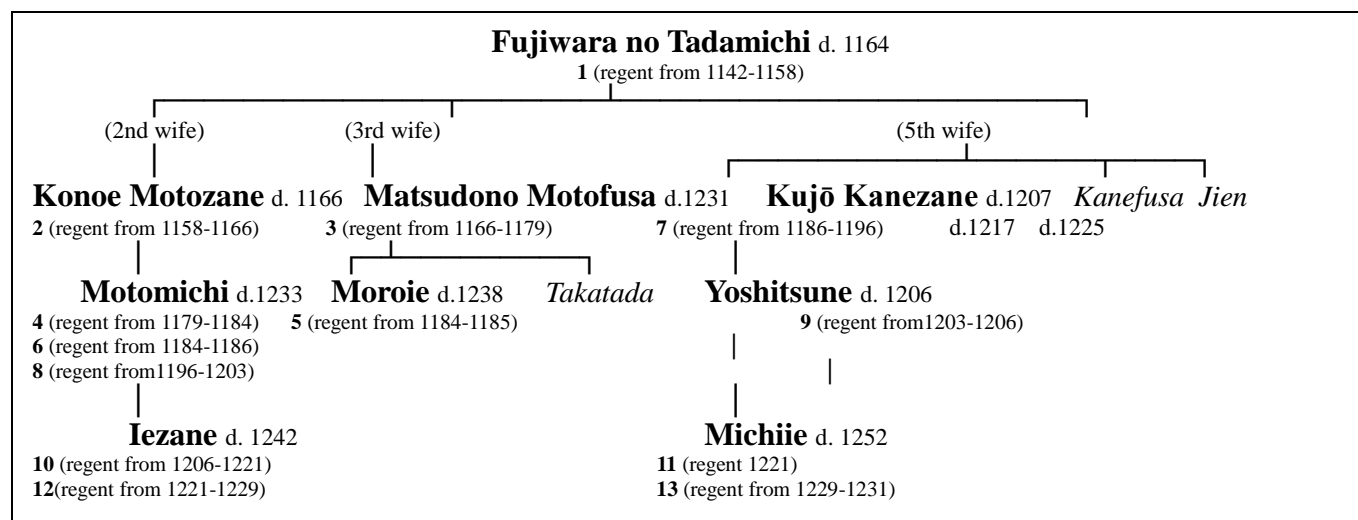
The hostility between Fujiwara members in the mid-twelfth century had been costly, as Tadamichi's brother Yorinaga was killed in the Hogen disturbance and all of Yorinaga's sons were sent into exile. In some sense the next generation of Fujiwara had learned from these mistakes, as none of them would ever again actively hitch their own ambitions to the outcomes

³² *DKR*, p. 10.

³³ For an in-depth treatment of this rivalry see Hurst, *Insei*, pp. 168-177.

of specific armed conflicts. Off the battlefield, however, was a different story. In the political arena, court competition and the meddling of warrior groups throughout the 1180s would continue to drive a wedge between Tadamichi's sons that would never be repaired.³⁴ A chart of the Heian-Kamakura Fujiwara regents is provided for reference below (with each regency numbered chronologically).

Fujiwara Regents: Late Heian-Early Kamakura Period



Tadamichi's sons Motozane and Kanezane were allowed to start their own branch families, named the Konoe and the Kujō respectively, laying the groundwork for competition. The Konoe branch of Motozane and his son Motomichi were initially the dominant Fujiwara players at court, a natural arrangement since Motozane was Tadamichi's eldest. The only branch that posed any competition to the Konoe was the lesser Matsudono branch, which had already

³⁴ The Taira forged an alliance with the Konoe, Minamoto Yoshinaka with the Matsudono, and Minamoto Yoritomo with the Kujō. For more on the Konoe-Taira alliance, see Higuchi Kentaro, "Heian makki ni okeru sekkanke no 'ie' to heishi," and see below for more on the Kujō and Matsudono alliances. Santa Takeshige, *Kamakura bakufu taisei seiritsushi no kenkyu*, pp.80-83 has a general treatment of this three-way split.

produced two generations of regents alternating power with the Konoe.³⁵ The third branch of the Kujō seemed destined to play a minor role in court affairs. But when an unlikely alliance with Minamoto Yoritomo suddenly catapulted Kujō Kanezane into the position of regent in 1186, it was a huge triumph for the Kujō branch and great upset for the Konoe. What followed was a decade of Kujō dominance at court that saw numerous policy advances for Yoritomo and the Kamakura Bakufu.

But with the death of mutual enemy Go-Shirakawa in 1192, this alliance between Kanezane and Yoritomo began to fracture in the absence of a common political goal.³⁶ In what I like to call the “Great Shuffle of 1196,” a courtier named Minamoto Michichika and others loyal to the Konoe took advantage of this estrangement and maneuvered a stunningly complex coup.³⁷ By intentionally fostering distrust between Yoritomo and Kanezane, the plotters were able to have Kujō Kanezane, his full-brothers Jien and Kanefusa, and his daughter Ninshi all removed from their prestigious posts in just a matter of days.³⁸ Suddenly both the Kujō and Yoritomo had been out-maneuvered, for now the Konoe-led court began working to undermine Yoritomo’s gains and pave the way for Go-Toba’s abdication to become the next powerful retired emperor.

Earlier generations of scholars tended to assume that after the rise of warrior power in the twelfth-century, the court was a powerless organ with “nominal authority,” and high-ranking

³⁵ Although the 2nd generation Matsudono regent, Moroie, owed his position almost solely to the interference of Minamoto Yoshinaka, and lost it as soon as Yoshinaka was labeled a rebel in 1185. See the detailed treatment of this alliance in Takehisa Tsuyoshi, “Sei taishōgun Minamoto Yoshinaka to nyūdo zenkanpaku Matsudono Motofusa,” esp. pp. 8-10; or the brief summary by Santa Takeshige on p.81.

³⁶ See *DKR*, pp. 8-10.

³⁷ See *DKR*, pp.8-10; Hurst, “The Kōbu Polity,” pp. 11-12; Brown and Ishida, pp. 409-410; and Robert Huey, *The Making of Shinkokinshū*, pp. 37-44 for treatments on this regime change.

³⁸ Kanezane was dismissed as regent (replaced by Motomichi), Jien was removed as Tendai Abbot, Kanefusa was removed as Grand Councillor, and Ninshi was expelled from the palace where she had been an imperial consort.

courtiers were simple pawns of the military clans.³⁹ The effectiveness of the Great Shuffle reminds us that courtiers were very much in control of their own destiny, and were able to manipulate even the strongest warrior leaders like Yoritomo.

Following the dramatic upheaval of the Great Shuffle of 1196, the vitriol between the Konoe and Kujō branches began to flow. Fujiwara Nagakane, a partisan of Kujō Kanezane, recorded in his diary these events from the eleventh month of 1196 with a surprising amount of emotion:

The 25th day...The people behind the matter of the Regent's order [dismissing Kanezane] were the Tsuchimikado Major Counselor [Michichika], Right Lesser Controller Taira Chikakuni, and Chamberlain Tomotsune... Now the Lord Kujō had since before his regency aided many in the affairs of state and had calmed the realm. His governance was pure and bright. To dismiss such a loyal and upright minister because of wicked complaints and flattery, obscures the goodness from heaven with confusion and secrecy... Oh, how sad, how sad!...

The 26th day. In the morning, it was decided the Lord Regent [Konoe Motomichi] would have his day of appreciation for the edict of change. My mind and spirit were depressed, and I left early.⁴⁰

Perhaps more powerful than Nagakane's sadness about Kanezane is his reaction to Konoe Motomichi. On Motomichi's first day as the new regent, Nagakane cannot even feign approval and has to leave court, perhaps before he betrays his emotions further.

Jien himself, unsurprisingly, lambasts Michichika and the Konoe whenever he has a chance, portraying them as malicious villains, or at the least, completely incompetent.⁴¹ He refers to the Great Shuffle as representing "a time when ingenious plots were common and even the

³⁹ Brown and Ishida, p. 406.

⁴⁰ *Sanchōki*, 1196/11/25-26.

⁴¹ See for example Brown and Ishida, p. 159, 162, and pp. 216-17. Kanezane himself seems to have enjoyed hearing about any mistakes the Konoe made while in power, and he also relished auspicious dreams of Kujō resurgence. See Huey, pp. 44-45.

protection of Kami and Buddhas was to no avail.”⁴² But of course relying only on pro-Kujō documents would only give us a part of the story. It is clear that the Konoe also had their allies and partisans, and none of these courtiers viewed the Konoe as incompetent. In many places other courtiers praise Michichika, Motomichi and other Konoe leaders the same way that Kujō sources praise Kanezane.⁴³ The stage was set for a feud that had no signs of resolving itself.

Feuding and Destabilization

Throughout the early thirteenth century the position of regent/head of the Fujiwara household would continue to oscillate between the Kujō and the Konoe clans. The competition was getting all the more polarized throughout the early Kamakura period, with little room to stand in the middle. Kujō Yoshitsune, Kanezane’s son, rose to prominence around the turn of the century and became regent in 1203.⁴⁴ But in another major setback for the Kujō, he died unexpectedly only three years later.

With its depiction of Yoshitsune’s death, the courtier text *Rokudai Shōjiki* gives us a unique window into the intra-Fujiwara feuding. The *Rokudai* author was very sympathetic to Kujō Yoshitsune, explicitly praising him as a man whose “talents surpassed all others” and whose “policies comforted the people.”⁴⁵ Intriguingly, the author records no animosity toward the Konoe branch. Moreover, in an interesting anecdote unattested in other texts, he gives the

⁴² Brown and Ishida, p. 159. Though not technically a member of the Kujō house, Jien was a Kujō in all but name.

⁴³ For example, see *Minkeiki* 1233/5/20 and *Dai Nihon Shiryo* selections for 1202/10/21.

⁴⁴ Note that this is a completely different Yoshitsune than Yoritomo’s famous brother.

⁴⁵ Appendix, p. 234.

implication that some Kujō took the feuding too far, which leads me to believe the author is more of a third-party observer, neither a Kujō nor a Konoe partisan.⁴⁶

The anecdote follows the author's discussion of Yoshitsune's death. After genuinely mourning for Yoshitsune, the *Rokudai* author then complains that Jien's level of concern over Yoshitsune's death was paranoid and unwarranted:

Even though death is the road we must all travel, the former Great Abbot Jien did not take Yoshitsune's death well. He was troubled day after day, repeating that he suspected something. If he had not already been convinced that this kind of tragedy was going to occur, then he would have had at least some consolation in the fact that death is a normal part of this world.⁴⁷

Regardless of whether Jien actually suspected something suspicious had happened, the *Rokudai* author remembers Jien obsessing over Yoshitsune's death, which to a monk would be forgetting the nature of one's renunciant vows. But beyond that, the implication that Jien had been convinced all along that something bad would happen to Yoshitsune is an intriguing picture of how intra-Fujiwara animosity was seen by other courtiers. *Rokudai*'s portrayal of Jien's paranoia bespeaks the intense competition between branches; competition in which a single member could either build on its branch's success or squander it. Whether or not Jien specifically suspected a Konoe or other court rival to have engineered Yoshitsune's death, it is clear from his own writings that he was distraught at the loss of Yoshitsune as the proper heir to the Kujō

⁴⁶ Current scholarly consensus centers around Fujiwara Takatada as the likely author of *Rokudai*, which would make sense as he was from the separate Matsudono branch of the Fujiwara (see chart above). Yuge, *Rokudai shōjiki godai teiō monogatari*, pp. 5-13.

⁴⁷ Appendix, p. 235.

branch.⁴⁸ No matter how Yoshitsune died, in the intense world of court competition, his death spelled the end of the Kujō's chances at power for an entire generation.

To make matters worse, the new retired emperor Go-Toba was moving behind the scenes to mobilize his own power base, causing more divisiveness and putting additional pressure on the feuding court factions. Though Jeffrey Mass argued that Go-Toba's policies were enforcing a kind of unified control, it is clear from the sources that this was not true unity.⁴⁹ Courtier authors looking back on this time record their negative impressions of Go-Toba's actions even before the outbreak of the Jōkyū Disturbance: for Jien they he was "making short-sighted plans," and for the *Rokudai* author he "forgot his obligations" and "could no longer tell right from wrong."⁵⁰ We will investigate Go-Toba's actions and policies more fully in Chapter three, but suffice it to say he was making a complicated situation at court even worse.

Conclusions

We have seen how the Fujiwara split into competing factions after the Hōgen and Heiji Disturbances, nearing the end of the twelfth century with a long decade of Kujō dominance. But when the Konoe-Kujō conflict reemerged in the Great Shuffle of 1196, there was no resolution to the divisiveness as the position of regent and Fujiwara head continued to oscillate between Kujō and Konoe claimants. Though all court writers inevitably viewed court disputes from their own biases, they shared in common a sense of frustration that the court, which was supposed to be a meritocracy of principled ministers, was so bitterly fragmented at a time when the warrior

⁴⁸ Rumors that Yoshitsune had been murdered rather than died naturally cropped up in other later texts, as Yuge Shigeru notes in supplemental footnote 179. See *Gukanshō*, Brown and Ishida pp. 167-68 for Jien's sadness over Yoshitsune.

⁴⁹ *DKR*, p. 11.

⁵⁰ Brown and Ishida, p. 226. Appendix, pp. 233.

government seemed to have it all together.⁵¹ Throughout all this chaos in Kyoto, cooperation with the Kamakura Bakufu and its stabilizing effect on the country remained a beacon of hope to many courtiers. However, as we will see, the Bakufu had more than enough problems of its own.

III. Internal Conflict: Challenges to the Bakufu

Though the legacy surrounding Yoritomo's achievements was still potent, his living legacy would unravel at a surprisingly fast pace in the early thirteenth century. Yoritomo's oldest, Yoriie, was duly appointed Shogun after the death of his father in 1199. But with Yoritomo gone, neither Yoriie nor the Hōjō clan behind him was immune to a series of challenges to their authority. These challenges were most concentrated in the early years of the thirteenth century, but would crop up multiple times throughout the early Kamakura period. Rebels against the Bakufu came from powerful Bakufu families or minor relatives of Yoritomo who exerted a claim on power simply by Genji blood.⁵² But in each case, it is unclear whether the claimants actively rebelled, or if the Bakufu made the first move by exterminating an inactive threat. However, as we will see shortly, a close investigation of the narrative literature can sometimes help us decide which interpretation is more plausible.

What is obvious is that without Yoritomo's unifying and symbolic leadership, the Kamakura Bakufu was suffering an identity crisis. The family of Yoritomo's wife Masako, the Hōjō, had played a major role in Bakufu organization, but without Yoritomo their right to control

⁵¹ This unfairness continued to preoccupy later Fujiwara members; see for example *Okanoya kanpakuki* 1246/4/23.

⁵² In succession, the casualties were Kajiwaru Kagetoki (killed 1st month of 1201), Jō Nagamochi (killed 5th month of 1201), Yoritomo's brother Ano Zenjo (killed 6th month of 1203), Hiki Yoshikazu (killed 9th month of 1203), Yoriie himself (banished 9th month of 1203, killed 7th month of 1204), Hōjō Tokimasa (banished intercalary 7th month of 1205), Wada Yoshimori (killed 5th month of 1213), Minamoto Sanetomo (assassinated 1st month of 1219) Yoritomo's nephew Ano Tokimoto (killed 2nd month of 1219), and Minamoto Yorishige (killed 7th month of 1219).

the Bakufu became more tenuous. Anyone with any claim to Minamoto blood or prominent warrior families with their own allies would now be inherent threats to Hōjō dominance of the Bakufu. It is of course understandable that prominent figures who owed loyalty to Yoritomo would not automatically extend such fealty to his son or his Hōjō in-laws, but the frequency of these struggles is still surprising.

Rather than trying to investigate them all, this section will focus on one particular incident: the massacre of the Hiki family in 1203. This conflict is revealing since it was one of the strongest threats to the Bakufu and because it ended up pitting Yoriie against the Hōjō. In retrospect we can say that the Hiki massacre pushed the identity crisis of the post-Yoritomo Bakufu to the breaking point, and the outcome was the end of Yoriie's short reign as Shogun.

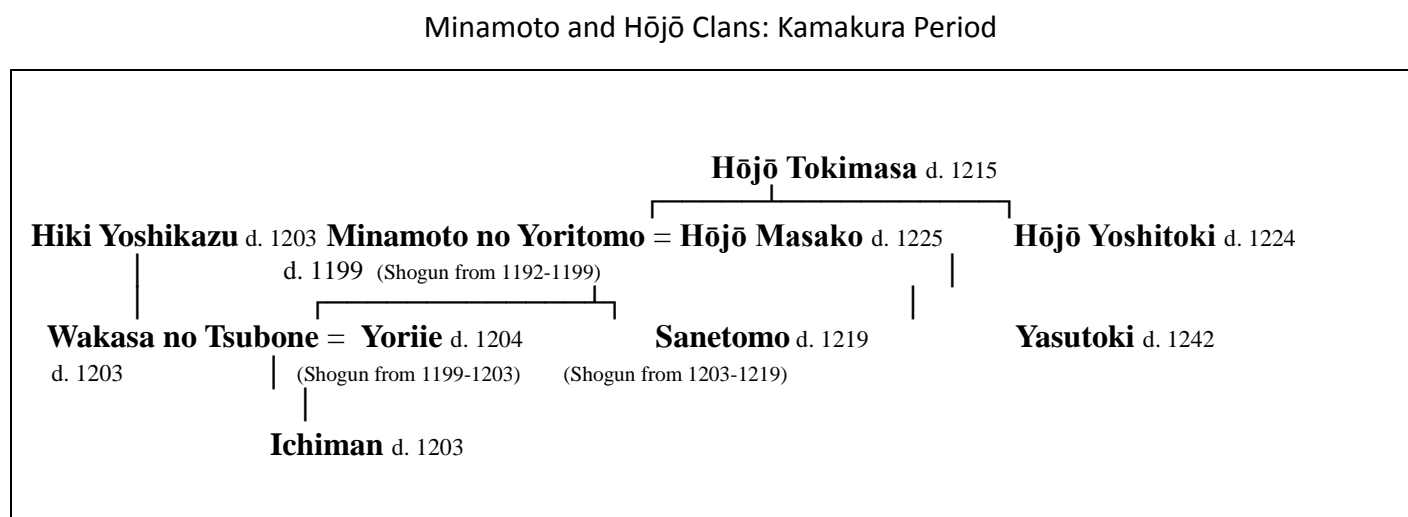
Yoriie and the Hiki Massacre

Yoriie, it must be said, responded to early threats against his rule with an overwhelming degree of force. For example, when Yoriie heard one of Yoritomo's closest aides, Kajiwara Kagetoki, was suspected of treasonous intentions, he executed Kagetoki and his entire family. It was an act most sources at the time condemned as an overreaction.⁵³ Historians have tended to highlight these episodes of misjudgment, concluding that Yoriie's reign failed because he was not as wise or as strong a leader as his father. Certainly Yoriie's questionable leadership ability was a factor, but in the end such "great men" historiography gives us only a partial explanation at best.⁵⁴ The answer to Yoriie's downfall was actually quite simple: he unwisely decided to have a

⁵³ Appendix, p.233, and footnote 13; Brown and Ishida p. 180; *Gyokuyo* 1200/1/2. McCullough notes that many medieval texts make Yoriie out to be a villain: "Shōkyūki," p. 177.

⁵⁴ Even Mass expresses this idea on DKR p. 11, when he says "Yoriie and Sanetomo were not of the same mettle as their father." It may be true that both of Yoritomo's sons were not naturally strong leaders like him, but it is also true that their interests were no longer in line with the interests of the increasingly entrenched Hōjō leadership that had

family of his own. A chart of the Minamoto, Hōjō, and Hiki families is provided for reference below.



proposing his son Ichiman to be next in line as Shogun.⁵⁶ A natural move, of course, since Yoriie had been given the position from his own father. But to the Hōjō it meant being completely cut off from their position as maternal relatives of the Shogun—the Hiki clan would now have that coveted role. When Yoriie fell ill at the beginning of the 9th month of 1203, a showdown between the Hiki and the Hōjō erupted. Tokimasa and his allies had the entire Hiki clan killed, including young Ichiman, and had Yoriie put into retirement in Izu. Sanetomo, Yoriie's younger brother, was promptly put forward as the new Shogun. The Hōjō position as maternal relatives of the Shogun was once more secure.

The *Azuma Kagami* description of the incident places the blame entirely on the Hiki clan. Upon Yoriie's illness, Hiki Yoshikazu proclaims that his grandson Ichiman should be Shogun and that "Lord Hōjō" Tokimasa should be killed.⁵⁷ What follows is a stirring account, where Masako hastily sends a letter to warn her father of Yoshikazu's threat; then, shaken by the news, Tokimasa confers with Ōe Hiromoto on what to do. Hiromoto proceeds to encourage Tokimasa and gives him approval to act quickly against the Hiki.

Some elements of this story should sound familiar. As we saw in chapter one, Masako and Hiromoto both played large roles in bolstering Yoshitoki's eventual decision to act against Go-Toba's threat. Here as well the *AK* account is using long-trusted characters in the narrative to portray the Hōjō's actions as rational and justified, a clear case of *AK*'s political bias toward the Hōjō leadership. In contrast, the courtier text *Rokudai Shōjiki* gives a simpler account:

When Yoriie collapsed with a fever and took holy orders, his maternal father-in-law the Tōtomi governor Hōjō Tokimasa raised an army of several thousand. Tokimasa defeated the army supporting Yoriie's heir Ichiman, including Hiki

⁵⁶ Brown and Ishida p. 178. Whereas *AK* claims Yoriie wanted to set up a dual Shogunate between his son and Sanetomo.

⁵⁷ *AK* 1203/9/1-2.

Yoshikazu, Kasahara Chikakage and Kasuya Arisue.⁵⁸ Tokimasa then brought up Yoriie's younger brother Minamoto Sanetomo and made a proclamation that Sanetomo should be Shogun. Subsequently Yoriie was put into confinement in the mountains of Izu.⁵⁹

Here there is no pretext or initiation from the Hiki side. It is the Hōjō, not the Hiki, who use Yoriie's illness as an opening to eliminate their threat.

All texts outside of *AK* give much the same impression, that Hōjō Tokimasa acted alone against the Hiki, and that he not only was responsible for Yoriie's confinement, but even Yoriie's death a year later!⁶⁰ So this episode is one of many that raise doubts about *Azuma Kagami's* reliability—indeed, my contention is that in matters relating to the early thirteenth century, it is often *less* reliable than more belletristic texts like *Rokudai Shōjiki*.⁶¹ For while the *AK* had a huge stake in how it portrayed the actions and decisions of the Bakufu leadership, courtiers in Kyoto would have very little reason to modify the account of events they heard at the time, especially if internal evidence suggests they felt no animosity towards the Hōjō, as we will see in the next section.

Yet one of the reasons that these events are somewhat shadowy in the sources is that the Bakufu was circumspect with the court about what was really happening at the time. In fact, multiple diaries from the ninth month of 1203 report that initially the court was told that Yoriie had actually died, and it was his death that had started the chain reaction leading to the destruction of the Hiki. In Fujiwara Teika's diary:

⁵⁸ Arisue and Chikakage are two of Hiki Yoshikazu's sons-in-law.

⁵⁹ Appendix, p. 233.

⁶⁰ See *Gukanshō*, Brown and Ishida pp. 178-79; *Rufubon Jōkyūki* section 3; Appendix, p. 234.

⁶¹ Matsushima Shūichi does convincing analysis of a later challenge, the Wada revolt, to find other sources more accurate than the *AK* account in that battle as well. See "Wada gassen no tenkai to kamakura bakufu no kenryoku jōkyō," pp. 40-45.

At evening when I was returning home, people were riding through the local streets. [They said] the Zaemon Lord Yoriie died, his heirs had a struggle for power, and his son (six years old, or four) and father-in-law were killed by the Governor of Omi Tokimasa. All those who supported [Hiki] in the capital were hunted down and destroyed. I heard they released a proclamation that the Emonfu Younger brother [Sanetomo] should succeed the family.⁶²

In Konoe Iezane's diary:

The Kanto told the retired emperor this morning that the 2nd rank Zaemon Barbarian-Subduing Shogun, Minamoto Ason Yoriie, had passed away on the 1st. [They said] he had an illness from before. He was 22 years old, the son of the late former Right Captain Lord Yoritomo. Said Lord Yoriie's full younger brother (age 12) was appointed Barbarian-Subduing Shogun tonight... We heard Lord Yoriie's son (age 6), along with Kebiishi Yoshikazu, were killed because of the new Shogun Sanetomo. Later I heard Yoriie's son was not killed, they just killed Yoshikazu.⁶³

From the start the accounts are full of confusion. Teika hears the news as a laundry list of rumors on his way home. Iezane was Minister of the Right at the time, hence his more accurate knowledge of what was actually reported to Go-Toba.⁶⁴ Yet even he hears first that the young Ichiman was killed, and then later that he was not. More fascinating is Iezane's terse entry from the end of that same month once the truth had come out: "It is not true that Kanto Zaemon Lord Yoriie died. He simply took vows as if he had died."⁶⁵

⁶² *Meigetsuki*, 1203/9/7.

⁶³ *Inokuma kanpakuki*, 1203/9/7. I take the phrase "because of the new Shogun" to mean that the Hiki were killed because there was now a new Shogun who was in danger of Hiki usurpation, but the wording may also mean "by the new Shogun," which I would take to mean "in his name/on his behalf."

⁶⁴ His father Motomichi had also been regent until the end of the previous year.

⁶⁵ *Inokuma kanpakuki*, 1203/9/30. Iezane does not discuss further how people at the court reacted to the deception. Teika also reports the misinformation equally briefly: "Yoriie is actually alive. Some say he took vows." *Meigetsuki*, 1203/9/23.

Clearly there was some misinformation coming from the Bakufu, and the truth took its time to make its way to Kyoto. The Bakufu's goal most likely was to minimize opposition not only to the Hiki massacre but also to Sanetomo's accession as Shogun. If Yoriie had already died, promoting Sanetomo without hesitation would indeed seem the best course of action to Go-Toba and the court. Such deception on the Bakufu's part is in keeping with this period of uneasy peace between Kyoto and Kamakura, where much energy was spent to prevent open conflict between the two institutions despite the internal struggles occurring behind the scenes.

Assessment of the Hōjō

What may be most fascinating is that while all of the sources (besides *AK*) place the blame for the Hiki massacre on Tokimasa, none of them condemn his actions. Jien, though he expresses sympathy for the Hiki, nevertheless repeats a refrain that is found in most of the sources: the real culprit was Yoriie himself.⁶⁶ To courtier and warrior writers, Yoriie's own use of excessive force when putting down early challenges to his reign was the cause of both the Hiki massacre and Yoriie's own death. Partly this line of thinking is evidence of the omnipresence of Buddhism in pre-modern Japan—in a karmic sense, Yoriie engineered his own downfall by accumulating evil deeds; or as the *Rokudai* author put it poetically: “The suffering of others that Yoriie had caused rose like smoke and made him ill.”⁶⁷ But there is an understanding of politics and human causation here as well. *Jikojibon Jōkyūki*, for its part, says Yoriie “governed with no regard for society.”⁶⁸ The *Rufubon Jōkyūki* cites two causes of Yoriie's brief rule: his estrangement from the gods and buddhas, and his transgression against “the trust of the people.”

⁶⁶ Brown and Ishida pp. 178-79.

⁶⁷ Appendix, p. 233. Also see footnote 53 above.

⁶⁸ McCoullugh, p. 177.

The *Rufubon* author also dryly notes the irony that Yoriie was killed at the hands of Tokimasa, “who used to be his supporter.”⁶⁹ Though these war tales and narratives make the Hōjō responsible for instigating the attack, they share with *Azuma Kagami* the idea that Yoriie and the Hiki got what they deserved.

Texts on all sides of the spectrum, however, go further than simply exonerating the Hōjō in light of Yoriie’s particular follies. Throughout the many challenges to the Bakufu, courtier and warrior sources continually assert that the Hōjō leadership was justified in the actions it took. From the executions of Yoritomo’s closest aides in 1200 and 1213, the destruction of Yoritomo’s surviving relatives in 1203 and 1219, and Tokimasa’s own revolt in favor of his second family in 1205, this period was rife with constant violence in Kamakura and the capital, with the Hōjō constantly eliminating threats to their hegemony.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, observers at the time never condemned the Hōjō leaders for their actions, but rather praised them for their decisiveness, strength, and determination:

There was nothing wrong in Masako’s forcing her father Hōjō Tokimasa to return to his home province [after Tokimasa’s rebellion]... Yoshitoki and his sister Masako administered the affairs of the military government.⁷¹ - *Gukanshō*

The family of Acting Master of the Right Capital and Shugo of Mutsu Hōjō Yoshitoki were resolute in wishing to uphold the legacy of the former Shogun. Not a single Hōjō had any desire to leave his family.⁷² -*Rokudai*

At that time in Kamakura there was a person named the Acting Right Capital Master concurrently Mutsu Governor Taira [Hōjō] Yoshitoki... He was very powerful and revered throughout the provinces. He was upright in matters of

⁶⁹ These quotes from *Rufubon*, section 3.

⁷⁰ See also Hurst, “The Kōbu Polity,” pp. 12-13.

⁷¹ Brown and Ishida, p. 182.

⁷² Appendix, p. 238.

government and did not disregard the position of the throne.⁷³ –*Rufubon Jōkyūki*

Why the unerringly positive portrayals of a family that was acting so ruthlessly? As I stated earlier, modern historians would be more inclined to see some of these “threats” to the Bakufu as mere victims of undeserved extermination. Sources at the time also wondered about this possibility, but even when a writer supposes one of the challengers was actually innocent, this observation is not coupled with any criticism of the Hōjō.⁷⁴ Despite so much evidence to the contrary, these writers did not entertain any doubts about the legitimacy of the Hōjō clan as undisputed leaders of the Bakufu.⁷⁵

One might suggest this is a kind of pre-modern fatalism toward history where there is no use questioning what happened. But such a position is untenable if we but step back and consider that the *raison d’être* for these texts in the first place was to prevent, criticize, or make sense of an event that many questioned: The Jōkyū Disturbance itself. If these writers had any anti-Hōjō agendas, they had numerous places in their texts to express their dissatisfaction in terms subtle enough to avoid detection by other pro-Hōjō groups. What is much more likely is that for observers in both Kyoto and Kamakura, the Hōjō had indeed inherited the positive legacy of Minamoto no Yoritomo as protectors of the state.

Conclusions

⁷³ *Rufubon JKK*, section 11.

⁷⁴ For example, *Rufubon JKK*, section 8, claims Ano Tokimoto was innocent, while *Maedabon JKK* claims Minamoto Yorishige was innocent, section 8B. Both texts praise the Hōjō; and in fact, *Maedabon* blames Yorishige’s death on Go-Toba, not Yoshitoki. Matsushima Shūichi also claims *Meigetsuki* suggests Wada Yoshimori only revolted because Bakufu leaders were already planning to execute him: “Wada gassen no tenkai to kamakura bakufu no kenryoku jōkyō,” p. 42. Yet Teika is also very pro-Hōjō.

⁷⁵ John Brownlee also rightly points out that the Hōjō used positive policies of restraint, protecting land rights of their vassals; so these practical reasons for Hōjō support must also be taken into account. “The Shōkyū War and the Political Rise of the Warriors,” pp. 67-68.

The literary texts show us very clearly the level of discord within Kamakura during this period of internal conflict. We saw how after Yoritomo's death, his living legacy (in Yoriie and Sanetomo) was unable to counterbalance the effectiveness of the Hōjō leadership, which remained strong. At the same time, Yoritomo's death represented a fracture, with cracks in the legitimacy of the Bakufu that other groups were quick to exploit, and these challenges continued to confront the Bakufu leadership throughout the early Kamakura period.

The first major question is whether the frequency of Bakufu struggles was a direct indicator of the weakness of the Hōjō regime. Considering that each new threat was brought down with relative efficiency and finality, as evidenced by the dry narration of both courtier and warrior sources, the answer seems to be no: the Hōjō had little trouble getting rid of their enemies. The second point relates to the overall significance of the violence in Kamakura. Though it may seem, as it might have to someone like Go-Toba, that the Hōjō were beset by growing threats to their leadership, the truth is the opposite: they were weeding out the competition, moving roughly from the strongest threats (like Yoriie's son) to the weakest. Unlike the directionless nature of the court conflicts, the Hōjō power bloc was coalescing and becoming more unassailable by the second decade of the thirteenth century—a crucial fact that was noticed by court observers as well as people in Kamakura.

IV. Sanetomo, Yoritsune, and the Future of Compromise

In the previous two sections, I presented the internal conflicts of the court and the Bakufu almost as if they were occurring in a vacuum. Of course, such a picture is important to grasp the internal dynamics of each capital, but it also glosses over the reality that Kyoto and Kamakura were very much interdependent in this interwar period. We already saw, for example,

that the rise and fall of different warrior groups affected the formation of court factions in Kyoto throughout the twelfth century; on the Bakufu side, how succession disputes were viewed and reported at the court was clearly a preoccupation of Bakufu leadership. This mutual dependence is a theme that I will hope to highlight in section IV as we take a closer look at court-Bakufu cooperation in the early thirteenth century.

The Unlikely Shogun

Starting with the maneuver of Sanetomo to the position of Shogun in 1203 and the forced exile of Hōjō Tokimasa in 1205, things began to go more smoothly for the Hōjō leadership. The new Shogun provided perhaps the most ideal situation for the operation of the Bakufu. Minamoto Sanetomo, still relatively young and inexperienced, continued to be the official head of the Bakufu, but in reality he had little interest in the decisions made in Kamakura and in warrior affairs more broadly. His interests were much more taken with the cultural activities of the capital, where he visited frequently, learning poetry from tutors like Fujiwara Teika and advancing through court rank. Meanwhile, with his father out of the way, Hōjō Yoshitoki was able to administer the Bakufu's affairs freely in consultation with his relatives and other loyal families like the Ōe, the Chiba and the Miura.

If Yoritomo had been the ideal leader because he had combined decisive action, visible charisma, and pragmatic intelligence, then it is safe to say that his heirs found the best solution to his legacy was to split up these assets.⁷⁶ Sanetomo represented a living reminder of Yoritomo's charisma and the visible face of Kamakura as a respectful liaison to Kyoto, and Yoshitoki and the

⁷⁶ Hurst, "The Kōbu Polity," p. 14.

other lead families took over the more pragmatic minutiae.⁷⁷ No one leader could any longer encapsulate both sides. But it is also true that while being somewhat ad hoc, the Bakufu's arrangement in the early 1200s was also a direct response to the difficulty it had surviving under Yoriie, who as we noted was more than adept at wiping out threats, but less adept at compromise—either with potential enemies or with his Hōjō relatives. With Sanetomo relatively uninterested in exercising his authority, the Hōjō regency could utilize it for themselves and Sanetomo could continue to rub shoulders with the established elite. Everyone could be happy.

Perhaps not *everyone*. Scholars suggest that Sanetomo's symbolic rule was indeed desirable to both the Bakufu and Go-Toba's faction at court.⁷⁸ The biggest critics, it seems, were actually some pro-Bakufu courtiers, whose dairies and narratives occasion negative comments about Sanetomo's move up the ranks of the court bureaucracy:

What the Shogun said [about wanting higher rank] is most inappropriate. To yet have been appointed minister twice in a year, and then at the same time receive a new change of appointment within the same year—in what age or what year has there been a precedent for this? Such would only be a personal decision, not a decision of [proper] governance. —*Meigetsuki*⁷⁹

[Sanetomo was] foolishly careless, indulging himself in learning and disgracing the offices of Minister and Senior Counselor. — *Gukanshō*⁸⁰

However, near the end of his life as his fated time approached, Sanetomo became unprincipled and forgot his compassion toward the people... He would not even

⁷⁷ A visible episode of Sanetomo's symbolic role can be seen in *Gukanshō*, where Jien mentions most warriors joined Yoshitoki during the Wada revolt because Sanetomo was at the front lines with him: Brown and Ishida, p. 183. It is also clear that to Jien, Yoshitoki was the one in control of military operations. See also *DKR*, p. 12.

⁷⁸ *DKR*, pp. 12-13. Though Uwayokote Masataka suggests that Go-Toba would have eventually wanted Sanetomo out of the way regardless of how much he had been coopted by the court. "Jōkyū no ran," pp. 165-66.

⁷⁹ 1218/i.2/15.

⁸⁰ Brown and Ishida, p. 191.

listen to requests from anyone unless they were sons of high-ranking officials. –
*Rokudai Shōjiki*⁸¹

Jien and Fujiwara Teika's comments are particularly insightful, especially since Teika himself had close interaction with Sanetomo, much of it positive.⁸² The *Rokudai* author's comments, we can say, represent more of a Confucian diatribe on hubris than a useful set of facts, but regardless they are additional evidence that Sanetomo was not well-regarded by all courtiers. At the same time, these are the same courtiers who praise the Hōjō repeatedly, so the issue is not whether Kyoto and Kamakura should cooperate, but the nature of that cooperation. What was probably in the foreground of these perceptions was twofold: First, Sanetomo, as a warrior, should not encroach on the traditional bureaucracy by seeking court rank. This would be a red flag, full of negative implications from Taira Kiyomori's actions in the past. Second, Sanetomo was not embodying the positive "warrior" traits that made Yoritomo such a good leader: decisive leadership, military prowess, and restraint, as we saw in section I.

Thus this discussion raises the question of what cooperation between Kyoto and Kamakura really entailed. Though we could elaborate more on Sanetomo's interactions with the court or investigate official documents to construct a "diplomatic history" between the two capitals, we would essentially be restricting our focus to the idiosyncrasies of a few political leaders. Cooperation between warriors and courtiers, if we want to look at it more broadly, was not simply a naïve ideal of preventing open warfare. There were real economic aspects of Kyoto

⁸¹ Appendix, p. 236.

⁸² See for example when Teika decides to give Sanetomo his own prized copy of the *Manyōshū* as a gift. 1213/11/8.

and Kamakura's dependence stemming from the complex world of public and private estates as it existed since the late Heian period.⁸³

Since the early phases of the Genpei War Yoritomo began making overtures to the court, and many of them revolved around the issue of protecting land rights held by courtiers.⁸⁴ We might even read between the lines of earlier courtier comments to see economic motives: that Yoritomo and the Hōjō “protected the throne,” were “upright” and “resisted extravagance” might also mean that they did not squeeze too much revenue from the estates they were charged with protecting. I do not think we need to see nascent capitalism behind every textual utterance, but we can at least understand that economics is certainly part of the context for this period of good relations between the two capitals.

When all was said and done, the warrior government in Kamakura was actually expending considerable energy to protect many courtiers' landed interests. On the other hand, the retired emperors, who had to create their own power base by collecting new estates instead of skimming off the top of established ones, were the biggest problem for other courtiers.⁸⁵ Even during Yoritomo's reign, courtiers complained about Go-Shirakawa's confiscation of land rights, often from temples.⁸⁶ Go-Toba was no less criticized for taking advantage of his position over estates, alienating many courtiers throughout the early thirteenth century.⁸⁷ When it came to abuses of estates, the Bakufu was an alternate source of authority that could safeguard the

⁸³ For an overview of the history of estates, see Dana Morris, “Land and Society” in the *Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 2.

⁸⁴ *Yoritomo and the Founding* pp. 79-82.

⁸⁵ Mikael Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, pp.187-88. The point is also made as early as Uwayokote's “Jōkyū no ran” (1962): p.171, that the *In*'s power came at the expense of the temples and the *sekkanke*.

⁸⁶ *Gyokuyō*, 1186/7/23.

⁸⁷ *DKR*, p. 11.

economic rights of courtiers, religious institutions, and even local landowners. Jien implies that the Bakufu's judicial authority went beyond estates as well, when he writes that Saionji Kintsune planned to appeal his case to Sanetomo when Go-Toba removed him from his court post.⁸⁸

The other major aspect of cooperation between Kyoto and Kamakura involved military security and peacekeeping in the provinces, an area in which the Bakufu particularly excelled.⁸⁹ Our courtier and warrior texts record a great deal of concern towards unprovoked acts of rebellion and military conflict. Throughout his narrative of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the *Rokudai* author is critical whenever court figures take up arms themselves instead of relying on the military aid of the Bakufu.⁹⁰ For him, the division of roles between the court and the warriors needed to be vigilantly maintained, and court-instigated battles would inherently put the state in danger.⁹¹ In this early Kamakura interwar period, elites were anxious about any action that might upset the fragile compromise between the two capitals.⁹²

All of these elements were background for why the Hōjō-Sanetomo arrangement of the Bakufu was successful and admired by courtiers and warriors, even if some of the former resented Sanetomo's personal proclivities. Who knows how long the Kamakura Bakufu could have survived unchanged under Sanetomo's titular leadership? The reason it did not is one of the strangest episodes in Kamakura history.

⁸⁸ Brown and Ishida, p. 187.

⁸⁹ Nishida Tomohiro, "Kamakura jidai no chōtei no kendanken to bakufu." *Nihonshi kenkyū*, vol. 493.

⁹⁰ See his depiction of the battle of Hojūji on Appendix p. 230, and his criticism of the western guards on pp. 239 and 242.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁹² See also *Rufubon JKK*, section 2, where the author bemoans the violence of Yoritomo's age and complains that "the realm is still not calm."

In the first month of 1219, at the ceremony celebrating Sanetomo's appointment as Minister of the Right—the same position that had raised ire with our courtiers earlier—he was attacked in plain sight on the grounds of Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine in Kamakura. His nephew, Kugyo, decapitated him, killed and injured a few bystanders, and then fled. Though the assassin was caught and killed, we have very little understanding of why Kugyo killed his uncle. Sources at the time were in disagreement about his motives: was it misguided revenge for his father Yoriie's death?⁹³ Was it frustration that he was passed over for Shogun?⁹⁴ Was it anger that Sanetomo had rejected his family's warrior legacy?⁹⁵ Modern scholars have come to no better conclusions than these, though some have posited interesting theories. Hurst assumed the Hōjō must have been behind the assassination, but the ideal nature of the Bakufu's arrangement with Sanetomo makes this solution extremely unlikely.⁹⁶

Whatever the reason, the Hōjō were beset once more with the problem they had managed to avoid since 1203—the question of their own legitimacy. The issue of who would be the next Shogun was of dire consequence, and the Hōjō were not the only ones concerned about the problem. After all, most courtiers imagined the Bakufu, and thus by extension the Shogun himself, to be the real protector of the state.⁹⁷

Kujō Yoritsune and the Desire for Peace

⁹³ The answer given by Jien; Brown and Ishida, p.191.

⁹⁴ The somewhat predictable answer of AK. It seems that any attacker of the Bakufu would be painted as wanting to be Shogun—it appears to be a stock formula of AK.

⁹⁵ The answer of *Rokudai*, Appendix, p. 237.

⁹⁶ Hurst, "The Kōbu Polity," p. 15.

⁹⁷ Mikael Adolphson, *The Gates of Power*, pp.187.

After Sanetomo's assassination, Masako went to Kyoto to initiate a discussion with Go-Toba over who could be made the next Shogun.⁹⁸ After over a decade of success under the symbolic rule of, essentially, a puppet Shogun, the Bakufu was interested in promoting another candidate who had little real interest in military affairs. Their first idea was for a member of the imperial house to become Shogun, but Go-Toba was adamantly against this.⁹⁹ Finally an acceptable candidate was found in Kujō Yoritsune, the infant son of Kujō Michiie. The thinking behind Yoritsune's appointment might be tenuous—he was a distant relative of Yoritomo's sister—but most sources remain almost blissfully positive about the arrangement.¹⁰⁰ Jien, for his part, was excited that someone from his Kujō branch could help stabilize the country. In fact, it was a major argument of Jien's *Gukanshō* is that this new Regent/Shogun would help bring the two capitals together:

Under the conditions of this Age, the [mistakes] of people will not be rectified unless an honest Shogun emerges. But such a Shogun has emerged, because the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva planned to produce a person from the regental house who would protect the state and guard the sovereign with the prestige and power of both learning and military might.¹⁰¹

Jien was not alone in his attitude of positive expectations about Yoritsune. The war tale *Rufubon Jōkyūki* lauds Yoritsune's symbolic procession to Kamakura with a note of hope: “The flower of these times did not seem inferior to any other age.”¹⁰² Indeed, it seems that some courtiers saw

⁹⁸ See Yamamoto Kōji, *Yoritomo no tenka sōsō*, pp.183-186.

⁹⁹ *DKR* pp.13-14.

¹⁰⁰ See *Rufubon JKK*, section 10 where Yoritsune is described as resembling Yoritomo.

¹⁰¹ Brown and Ishida, p. 225.

¹⁰² *Rufubon JKK*, section 10.

this era of cooperation with the Bakufu as reminiscent of the age of Fujiwara peace.¹⁰³

It must be said that not everyone in court circles was completely happy with Yoritsune's appointment as Shogun. There is evidence that Michiie himself had second thoughts about his son being in this role, and Fujiwara Teika reflected negatively on Yoritsune's appointment even years later.¹⁰⁴ Even so, the level of disagreements about who should be the next Shogun suggests how important the role of Shogun was, not merely as the leader of the Bakufu proper, but as a symbolic leader uniting Kyoto and Kamakura. Otherwise, it is hard to guess why courtiers would have much of an opinion on the matter.

But even though the decision to send Yoritsune to Kamakura had been made, Go-Toba would not brook such easy cooperation between the two capitals. He withdrew his approval of Yoritsune, realizing he could potentially force the Bakufu into a crisis by intentionally stalling on the issue of Shogunal succession.¹⁰⁵ In the weary interwar age, desire for peace and cooperation permeated discourse, Go-Toba ominously began to manipulate warrior factions with the same alacrity as Go-Shirakawa. His actions would eventually plunge Japan into open conflict again and forced a new arrangement between the court and Bakufu that was no longer based on parity. But this is a story for later chapters.

What we can say definitively is that while Jien was writing his *Gukanshō* ostensibly to persuade Go-Toba to accept Yoritsune's candidacy as the new Shogun, he also seemed to be aware that Go-Toba was making plans against the Bakufu. Though most of Jien's comments of advice or criticism toward Go-Toba throughout the work are subtle, we see him begin to make his case more strongly as he nears the end of *Gukanshō*:

¹⁰³ This is, of course, Jien's major point in *Gukanshō*. But Santa Takeshige argues this consciousness of a Fujiwara legacy was more widespread. *Kamakura Bakufu taisei seiritsushi no kenkyū*, part I.

¹⁰⁴ See Kouchi Shōsuke, *Nihon chusei no chotei-bakufu taisei*, p.43 on Michiie's position; *Meigetsuki* 1225/11/19.

¹⁰⁵ *DKR*. pp. 14-15.

And yet the sovereign does not understand that Yoritsune was born for the benefit of the state, man, and the sovereign. A very serious matter indeed! It was definitely a divine decision that it would be good for the sovereign to have the same person serve as Shogun and Regent. The reason for this decision has been made clear. The ancestral Kami decided to provide the sovereign with a guardian who would have no desire to follow a course of rebellion and who would also be powerful and prestigious. It would be best if His Majesty understood that Yoritsune's birth and appointment were brought about in this way...

It has come to my attention that the sovereign is making short-sighted plans because he does not understand either the Principle of deterioration alternating with improvement from the beginning to the end of the present small kalpa, nor the Principle—granted by the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House and of the Fujiwara and Minamoto clans—for the Final Age, a Principle that has come down to us from the ancient past. The Principles of things, and the history of our country, will surely be stabilized if the sovereign acts according to these Principles.¹⁰⁶

This rhetoric from *Gukanshō*, despite its reliance on Jien's unique concept of "Principles," is perhaps the clearest presentation of the early Kamakura desire for peace.¹⁰⁷ Throughout the trials that the court and Bakufu faced during this interwar period, it was peaceful relations *between* court and Bakufu that most elites hoped for in the future. After the decades of violence in the Genpei War, and the period of uneasy peace and internal strife in the early 1200s, courtier and warrior elites were desperate to maintain stability in the Japanese state. Yoritsune was a touchstone for people on all sides, even Go-Toba and his retinue, because Yoritsune represented the future of the legacy of Yoritomo.

Conclusion

¹⁰⁶ Brown and Ishida, pp. 225-26.

¹⁰⁷ See Ibid for an exhaustive treatment of Jien's thought, especially pp. 420-425.

This chapter has covered much ground in its attempt to show the concerns and beliefs of Japanese elites in the pre-Jōkyū interwar period. Before we move on to analysis of the Jōkyū Disturbance itself, we need to take stock of what we have learned about the early Kamakura period. From our investigation of a range of different sources, these are the points about the interwar period on which most courtier and warrior elites agreed:

- 1) Yoritomo's reign and formation of the Bakufu was a positive development for Japan. Yoritomo was in many ways the ideal leader, and his policies and attitudes restored the authority of the court, kept warrior groups under control, and protected the country.
- 2) The court was hopelessly fragmented, whereas the Bakufu was recovering from its problems. The Hōjō were capable leaders and had inherited Yoritomo's legacy of decisive and protective rule. Even without a Shogun like Yoritomo, the Bakufu's legitimacy was solid.
- 3) Cooperation between the court and the Bakufu provided economic and military security. Kyoto and Kamakura had separate roles to fill and thus both capitals needed each other.

This chapter's investigation of the early Kamakura texts allows for a reassessment of the early Kamakura interwar period. Previous generations of scholars have posited that Yoritomo wrested control of the country from an unwilling court, and that the time leading up to the Jōkyū War was full of growing resentment to the rise of the new "warrior class." Clearly this is not the case. Courtier and warrior elites expressed gratitude for the cooperative arrangement between the court and Bakufu, and in an age of interwar anxiety and deep internal division, each side was placing its hopes on the other. That is why court writers praised the Hōjō and why Bakufu leaders tried to obscure their own internal divisions. Both Kyoto and Kamakura recognized after the legacy of

Yoritomo that they both needed each other, and it was this interdependency as much as the hiatus in hostilities that had to be mourned after 1221. And that extreme sense of loss is why, I think, the Jōkyū Disturbance was such a shocking event.

Chapter 3 – How Did the Jōkyū Disturbance Happen?

Hindsight and its Pitfalls

The warrior text *Maedabon Jōkyūki* presents a series of startling actions by Go-Toba in the years leading up to the Jōkyū Disturbance. His plotting against the Bakufu, it would seem, took on villainous proportions:

Now it appeared that the Retired Emperor would do anything to destroy the Kantō. He gathered young children from the capital and gave them presents, wanting them to sing the phrase “giji chōtō.” Even if he had not bribed them, they said it was just a trifling thing, so they sang “Giji Chōtō, Giji Chōtō!” These were actually the sounds for the characters “Off with Yoshitoki’s head!” [義時打頭]. Also, his changing of the era name to “Jōkyū” was full of meaning. Furthermore, he ordered the monks of Nara and Enryakuji to put a curse on Yoshitoki... He did esoteric practices of purging, which were also to destroy the Kanto.¹

Go-Toba’s actions are almost cartoonish. He bribes young children to sing about Yoshitoki’s death as a subversive nursery rhyme, albeit one that no observer would be able to understand without explanation.² He puts curses on Yoshitoki and does personal esoteric practices to bring about divine intervention for his goals. He even changes the era name as a political act “full of meaning,” although the author does not explain why these characters have such ponderous significance. Jōkyū (承久)—meaning “long inherited” succession—is little different from the vague euphemistic terms for government that make up most era names. Certainly this was not the intentional, revolutionary recasting of era names that would happen with Go-Daigo a century later.³ In fact, court diaries demonstrate that the decision to change the

¹ *Medabon*, section 9A. “The Kantō” is a common term in this period both for the east and for the Bakufu.

² The secret meaning of the phrase relies on the ambiguity of *onyomi*, or Chinese readings of characters, which would not make immediate sense: many character combinations could be read as “giji chōtō.”

³ Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo’s Revolution*, pp. 34 and 176.

era name to Jōkyū was a routine deliberation spearheaded by influential courtiers and merely assented to by Go-Toba.⁴ Clearly there is some fanciful literary invention here.

The earlier *Rufubon*, which has fewer of these portents, nevertheless traverses the same territory by saying “the fact that Retired Emperor Go-Toba was planning to destroy the Kanto had become clear.”⁵ The problem is, in the months leading up to the Jōkyū Disturbance, Go-Toba’s war was anything but clear.⁶ From the historical record we have, only Jien seems to have had an inkling that Go-Toba was up to something, as we saw at the end of the previous chapter. Yet, to be fair, we do not know exactly what “short-sighted plans” Jien was imagining. He simply may have been concerned about further efforts to stall on Yoritsune’s appointment as Shogun or some other devious, but ultimately conventional, political act of ill-will. The idea that Go-Toba would raise troops on his own and take the initiative in battle was not at all clear to people at the time. It only seemed clear to them in *retrospect*.

In the last chapter I attempted to talk about the pre-Jōkyū period without falling into the trap of assuming historical inevitability. In the introduction to that chapter I said that one of the advantages of using a wide range of sources that covered the Jōkyū divide was that we can get a sense of what the interwar period meant to people who lived through it. There is also a disadvantage, however, to texts written after an event: they also make it more likely to see what happened as inevitable. For generations after Jōkyū, writers discussing the early thirteenth century would naturally be looking for clues or reasons why such a drastic event happened. We need to look at Go-Toba’s actions and the outbreak of the Jōkyū Disturbance with fresh eyes.

⁴ *Inokuma kanpakuki*, 1219/4/12.

⁵ *Rufubon*, section 9.

⁶ *DKR*, p. 16.

I. Go-Toba: The Last *insei* Ruler?

Surely one of the most difficult questions to address is what exactly Go-Toba was trying to do. How did he visualize his role in the Japanese state? Did he intend from the start of his reign as cloistered emperor (*in*) to destroy the Bakufu, as the *Jōkyūki* texts surmised above? Or was it a relatively spontaneous decision brought on by chance? Did his policies intentionally and inexorably push his private base of economic and military support into opposition with the Bakufu, or did Go-Toba choose at the last minute to use these resources in a bold gambit against warrior government? We may never be able to answer all these questions, but a brief investigation of Go-Toba in the sources will yield some insights. First, though, we need to place Go-Toba's actions and his supporters into the context of *insei*—rule by retired emperors—that by the late Heian period had, perhaps unexpectedly, become a vigorous and integral element of the Japanese state.

Insei Rule in Japan

Most of our understanding of the topic of *insei* comes from the masterful monograph Cameron Hurst published in 1976 called *Insei: Abdicated Sovereigns in the Politics of Late Heian Japan, 1086-1185*. I have already referred to this work when I discussed the historical background of the Heian period in the introduction. As I mentioned in the introduction, Hurst convincingly shows how emperors used abdication as a political tool to take control of imperial succession. Hurst's book is comprehensive, including an overview of early precedents for abdication in the Asuka/Nara periods, a detailed political history of each of the major *insei* rulers—Go-Sanjō, Shirakawa, Toba, and Go-Shirakawa—as well as an investigation of the structure and function of the retired emperor's household office (*in-no-cho*). In terms of method

we see that he and Jeffrey Mass were of the same mind, as Hurst explicitly states the need to look at primary documents instead of to rely “heavily upon works of a literary and pseudo-historical nature.”⁷

What he was able to achieve with this method is still impressive today. In the central section of the work, where he investigates the political history of the late Heian period, he convincingly uses *kanbun* diaries to reconstruct the internal dynamics of the Heian court, confidently elucidating the various interpersonal connections and inner workings of imperial politics. In this section the high-handedness of the *insei* rulers and their ability to enforce decisions—whether through consensus or coercion—is apparent. In the final section on the structure of *insei* rule, he analyzes documents from the *in-no-cho* (院庁) and puts forth some suggestive conclusions. The two biggest conclusions are 1) the *in-no-cho* was a private organ of the imperial household dealing almost exclusively with land holdings of the imperial family, thus *not* an alternate court or governing body;⁸ and 2) orders (*kudashibumi* 下文) or communiqués (*chō* 牒) from the retired emperor had authority, but less authority than those of the Grand Council of State (*dajōkan* 太政官).⁹

There is only one major problem with Hurst’s analysis, which can be seen in the disjuncture between the two sections I outlined above. In the political history section, Hurst shows the retired emperors acting with decisiveness on issues such as imperial succession, investiture, the rise and fall of court factions, and manipulation of military clans. Yet Hurst’s analysis of the structure of *insei* suggests that “rule by ex-emperors” was restricted to private land rights and mere competition with other kinship groups. The first section, by emphasizing the

⁷ Hurst, *Insei*, p. 7.

⁸ See Hurst, pp. 217, 236, and 276.

⁹ Hurst, p. 231.

broad authority of the retired emperors, is pointing in a different direction than the second. The problem is that while the *in-no-cho* itself may not have been a national organ of government, the *insei* rulers were surely acting like national leaders on a wide range of political, economic, and military issues pertinent to the Japanese state. Even if the retired emperors had no separate organ of government outside of the court, they still exhibited a systematic and comprehensive pattern of rule, and were undoubtedly operating as *de facto* leaders of Japan.

It is worth mentioning that more recent Japanese scholarship has articulated views that assign even more power and authority to the retired emperors. Kouchi Shōsuke, for example, credits the *insei* system as the catalyst for the court-Bakufu system of the Kamakura period, seeing the political developments of Yoritomo as a direct result of *insei* politics.¹⁰ Many scholars, including Uwayokote Masataka, have argued in recent decades that *insei*, and not the Kamakura Bakufu, is the political framework that dominated and defined the Japanese state throughout the entirety of the Kamakura period.¹¹ If Hurst was reacting against Japanese scholars who explained *insei* in problematic terms, conditions might seem quite different today with more detailed and persuasive studies on *insei* available in Japanese.¹²

The only other problem with Hurst's study is that he stops it short at 1185, the point when Yoritomo defeated the Taira clan in the Genpei War. In other words, Go-Shirakawa (1127-1192) marks the last time that retired emperors had true control and are thus worthy to be considered under the banner of *insei*. Hurst does admit that some scholars include Go-Toba in the *insei* period; yet he explains his choice of parameters by positing that the imperial house "enjoyed its real golden age" from 1086-1185, when the retired emperor system was at its height in terms of

¹⁰ *Nihon chūsei no chōtei-bakufu taisei*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007.

¹¹ See especially the first part of *Kamakura jidai seiji shi kenkyū*.

¹² For other solid studies on *insei*, see Motoki Yasuo, *Inseiki seijishi kenkyū* (1996), and Shirane Yasuhiro, *Chusei no ocho shakai to insei* (2000).

wealth and real political power.¹³ Certainly these are reasonable factors to take into account, but in some sense we can see today that Hurst was still constrained by English-language historiography as it existed in the 1960s and 70s. Yoritomo's victory in 1185 was seen as a watershed moment by postwar scholars of Japan: it represented, as I alluded to before, the end of court power and the triumph of the "warrior class"—so much so that 1185 was considered a hard and fast break in periodization not only between the Heian and Kamakura periods, but even between the larger "classical" and "medieval" eras.¹⁴

But with the more recent shift in thinking about the medieval period that I mentioned in chapter one, we are now free to extend Hurst's analysis of *insei* to Go-Toba. Even though the role of the Kamakura Bakufu obviously complicated the *insei* system, Go-Toba clearly inherited many of his own political ambitions from earlier abdicated emperors like Go-Shirakawa. I might argue, in fact, that Go-Toba, and not Go-Shirakawa, should be seen as the last independent *insei* ruler.¹⁵ Therefore, the question of whether the legacy of the *insei* emperors was responsible for Go-Toba's miscalculations in the Jōkyū Disturbance should provide us with serious food for thought.

All the Ex-Emperor's Men

¹³ Hurst, pp. 211-213. In this section he alludes to the idea that the "insei period proper" came to an end with Go-Shirakawa's death, which should extend the parameters later to 1192. However, since he most often ends his discussions at 1185 he fails to recognize how Go-Shirakawa's remained powerful beyond that point. See chapter 2, section II above for Go-Shirakawa after 1185.

¹⁴ For example, the *Cambridge History of Japan* treats 1185 as the dividing line between volumes 2 and 3.

¹⁵ And by this, I mean the last retired emperor to operate within the traditional *shōen-kokugaryō* system. Go-Daigo I would place in a new category since he visualized a different order for Japan, though his attempt to manipulate warrior clans is part and parcel with the *insei* legacy.

Was Go-Toba actively building an army or simply building an economic base throughout his early years as retired emperor? In order to answer this question we need to look at the composition of Go-Toba's supporters, and whether evidence from different sources gives us any new information about how he was able to cajole fighting men to his side. In this venture I cannot hope to eclipse the investigation Jeffrey Mass made in his *Development of Kamakura Rule*, especially in terms of comprehensiveness. Mass illustrated six different social categories of warriors that made up Go-Toba's army, from high-ranking Bakufu officials to regional warriors and estate officers, all the way to conscripts.¹⁶ Likewise, the Japanese scholar Hiraoka Yutaka has done exhaustive analysis on the Northern and Western Guards (*hokumen* 北面 and *saimen* 西面)—the private armed guards who acted as the retired emperor's processional entourage and became the nucleus of Go-Toba's private army.¹⁷

Both of these detailed investigations have shed some light on who these supporters were and from whence they came. Mass explains that outside of conscripts and his private guards, Go-Toba's men were mostly warriors from the central and western provinces who were either unconnected with the Bakufu, or were Kamakura housemen (*gokenin*) that had been overlooked for bigger perks.¹⁸ So the element of disenfranchisement by the Bakufu is a huge factor. Hiraoka focuses on just one of the groups, Go-Toba's private guards, and concludes instructively that the majority of these were *gokenin* or children of *gokenin*.¹⁹ In other words, the people joining Go-Toba's guards were lower-ranked men who still owed some allegiance to Kamakura, but saw Go-

¹⁶ *DKR*, p.18.

¹⁷ Hiraoka Yutaka, "Gotoba'in saimen ni tsuite" and "Gotoba'in jōhokumen ni tsuite," in *Nihonshi kenkyū* 316 and *Kokushigaku* 130 respectively.

¹⁸ *DKR*, pp. 18-20. For example, *gokenin* that did not have *jitō* status, or estate officers that found themselves outmaneuvered by local Bakufu representatives.

¹⁹ Hiraoka, "Gotoba'in saimen ni tsuite," pp. 52-55.

Toba as a source of advancement. In both of these works, the promise of socio-economic gain is cited as the major factor motivating Go-Toba's entourage.

These works show us clearly the kind of men that Go-Toba targeted, yet Mass' and Hiraoka's analysis comes up lacking when answering the question of why these men fought for Go-Toba. The documentary evidence on which these scholars rely cannot give us any information about the complex motivations that led these men to join the retired emperor. By broadening the scope to narrative tales of defection, we can understand some of the factors that have been missing from scholarly discussion of Go-Toba's army. These texts give new implications not only for how Go-Toba coalesced his army, but also how people in the thirteenth century understood these defections from the Bakufu. In tales of individual warriors, we see some important motifs such as the importance of marital ties that even accomplished scholars like Mass have almost completely overlooked as factors in Go-Toba's level of success.

For example, let us first consider an obvious example of a Go-Toba supporter. Bōmon Tadanobu was a high-ranking courtier who ended up serving as one of Go-Toba's advisors in the Jōkyū Disturbance. To understand why he was such a staunch ally of the retired emperor, we need to look no further than his family situation. The Bōmon family had such close marriage ties to the imperial family that their fortunes were inextricably bound to Go-Toba.²⁰ Tadanobu's father, Bōmon Nobukiyo (?-1216), gave his children into very politically significant marriages that, taken together, form a who's who of pro-Go-Toba and anti-Hōjō relationships. Of Nobukiyo's daughters, two became imperial consorts (to Go-Toba and Juntoku, respectively) while another daughter became Minamoto Sanetomo's principal wife (we will return to her later). Nobukiyo's son Tadakiyo married the daughter of Hōjō Tokimasa and Maki no Kata, the guilty parties in a rebellion against the main Hōjō branch in 1205.

²⁰ In addition to this discussion see McCullough, *Shōkyūki* p. 183 footnote 73.

So to summarize, two of Nobukiyo's children married directly into Go-Toba's line and two married Bakufu families that, by 1219, had no loyalty left to the current regime under Yoshitoki. So it makes more sense that Tadanobu, Nobukiyo's most prominent son, would become one of Go-Toba's staunchest supporters even though he had no politically significant marriages himself.

Rokudai Shōjiki provides an interesting depiction of Tadanobu's fate after he is condemned to execution after the Jōkyū Disturbance. As Tadanobu and the others make the trip from Kyoto towards Kamakura, the author imagines Tadanobu's internal state:

Minister Tadanobu remembered how this whole road had been lined with horses on the way to Sanetomo's appointment ceremony as Minister of the Right, and then he thought of the sad return back, his sleeves wet from tears. And today there would be no drying them at all, he thought as he kept walking in grief, not knowing that his sister, the nun widow of Sanetomo, had been negotiating on his behalf for pardon. Because of her efforts, when they reached Hamana bridge, Tadanobu alone was allowed to turn back to the capital.²¹

In this text Tadanobu's sadness at his fate is compounded by his memories of making the same trip to Kamakura for Sanetomo's ill-fated appointment ceremony two years earlier. The author perhaps intentionally imagines Tadanobu revisiting Sanetomo's death if only to link Tadanobu's past to his future. Tadanobu's wife is Sanetomo's sister, and it is because of her that Tadanobu is spared. Tadanobu's family ties may have sealed his allegiance to Go-Toba, but in a fitting irony they also saved him from execution.

But what about warriors who were clearly partisans of the Bakufu before 1221? How did Go-Toba win them over, and what are some of the major factors we see in other sources that seem absent from secondary scholarship on this period?

1) Miura Taneyoshi 三浦胤義 (?-1221)

²¹ Appendix, p. 242-243.

Miura Taneyoshi was from a clan that had been one of Yoritomo's biggest supporters. The war tales especially focus heavily on Taneyoshi's defection to Go-Toba, which they place as one of the first steps Go-Toba took to initiate his war. Go-Toba sends his lead general Fujiwara Hideyasu to feel out Taneyoshi's loyalties. In the *Jikōjibon JKK*, the conversation follows thus:

Hideyasu said, "Constable, abandon your ties with Miura and Kamakura and join the cloistered emperor's service here in the capital. Am I wrong in thinking that something like this has been on your mind? Go Toba has the true spirit of a ruler! I'm sure that he's had something on his mind recently too. Think it over—will you adhere to Kamakura, or will you follow him?"

Taneyoshi replied, "I'm delighted to hear you talk that way. I have indeed been thinking of forsaking Kamakura and my ancestral home in Miura in order to join Go Toba's service here in the capital. If you wonder why I would do this, you must remember who my wife is: Gerent Ippō's daughter, the most famous beauty in Kamakura, whose former husband, the late Commander of the Left Gate Guards, Yoriie, was slain by Governor Tokimasa of Tōtōmi, and whose child by Yoriie was put to death by Tokimasa's son, Yoshitoki. Even after she and I were married, she continued weeping day and night in the most pitiful way, lamenting, 'If only I weren't a woman! A man could retire to some mountain fastness and recite the Buddha's name for their sakes.' It broke my heart to watch her."²²

Taneyoshi then explains that he wants to join Go-Toba's revolt so he can shoot "a well-sent arrow" against Yoshitoki to soothe his and his wife's hearts. The lack of artfulness in Taneyoshi's disclosure perhaps points to the *Jikōjibon*'s place as the earliest form of the Jōkyūki war tale—I doubt a true defector would explain his decision with phrases such as "I have indeed been thinking of forsaking Kamakura and my ancestral home," instead using less personally damning locution. This awkwardness aside (we will come back to it in chapter five) there is no ambiguity about the reason for Taneyoshi's decision here. In these texts, it is not personal gain or any distinct loyalty to Go-Toba that motivates Taneyoshi, but active resentment against the Bakufu because of his wife's experiences.

His wife had been caught up in the Hiki massacre described in the previous chapter: she

²² McCullough, pp. 187.

was one of Yoriie's consorts at the time. Once Hōjō Tokimasa decided to eliminate Yoriie's line, her son was targeted as a threat.²³ Her loss and her anger against the Hōjō lasted long after her remarriage to Taneyoshi. Here we see an extremely important aspect to these splits within families: marital ties. Taneyoshi's defection to Go-Toba is based almost entirely on his wife's troubled past. His marital connections and his loyalty to his wife became the foundation for anti-Hōjō hostility. A similar tale of Taneyoshi's grudge against the Hōjō is found in the other *JKK* versions as well. In the *Rufubon* version Taneyoshi says even more strongly that his wife's first child "was killed without reason" by Yoshitoki.²⁴

We saw in chapter two that the conflict between Minamoto no Yoriie and the Hōjō clan largely revolved around the problem of marriage politics and the importance of maternal connections. This is an issue that jumps off the page in the literary sources—yet even so scholars like Mass and Hiraoka largely ignore the role of maternal relatives and marriage politics in pre-modern political conflicts. Public roles for women may indeed have been few in Japanese society, but the connections between husband and wife, and between men and their wives' families, are a piece of the puzzle we cannot afford to overlook. We also see that the role of personal grudge, which Mass recognizes as a limited factor in Bakufu defection, could also come from issues beyond economic disenfranchisement.²⁵ The legacy of the violent struggles of the period of internal conflict continued to impact people in deeply personal ways long after events like the Hiki massacre had ended.

2) Ichijō (一条) Family

²³ Note that this is a different child than Ichiman, the son by Hiki no Tsubone mentioned in chapter two, although both boys appear to have been killed around the same time.

²⁴ *Rufubon*, section 13.

²⁵ *DKR*, p. 25.

The Ichijō, an aristocratic Kyoto family, might seem much more unlikely partisans for Go-Toba than the Bōmon discussed above. Ichijō patriarch Yoshiyasu had been Yoritomo's closest court ally in the twelfth century, and his brother-in-law.²⁶ Yet a survey of Ichijō family connections in the following years shows more ambiguity. Two of Yoshiyasu's daughters married into the Kujō and Saionji families respectively, which might portend a pro-Bakufu slant. Another of his daughters, however, served as Go-Toba's wetnurse.²⁷ His son Takayoshi also had multiple wives, one from the neutral Matsudono family, one from a pro-Heike branch of the Fujiwara, and one from the Kasuya family (who were major Go-Toba supporters).²⁸ This dilution of interests suggests the generations after Yoshiyasu were not strongly committed to maintaining their father's alliance with the Bakufu. If one additionally considers that Yoshiyasu, his heir Takayoshi, and Yoritomo himself all died in the last years of the twelfth century, it seems likely that the Ichijō-Minamoto alliance—based originally on the deep personal connections between these members—was merely running on fumes in the early thirteenth century.²⁹ The real allegiances of the second and third generation of Ichijō were being solidified in the direction of Go-Toba's clique. See the chart on the Ichijō family below.

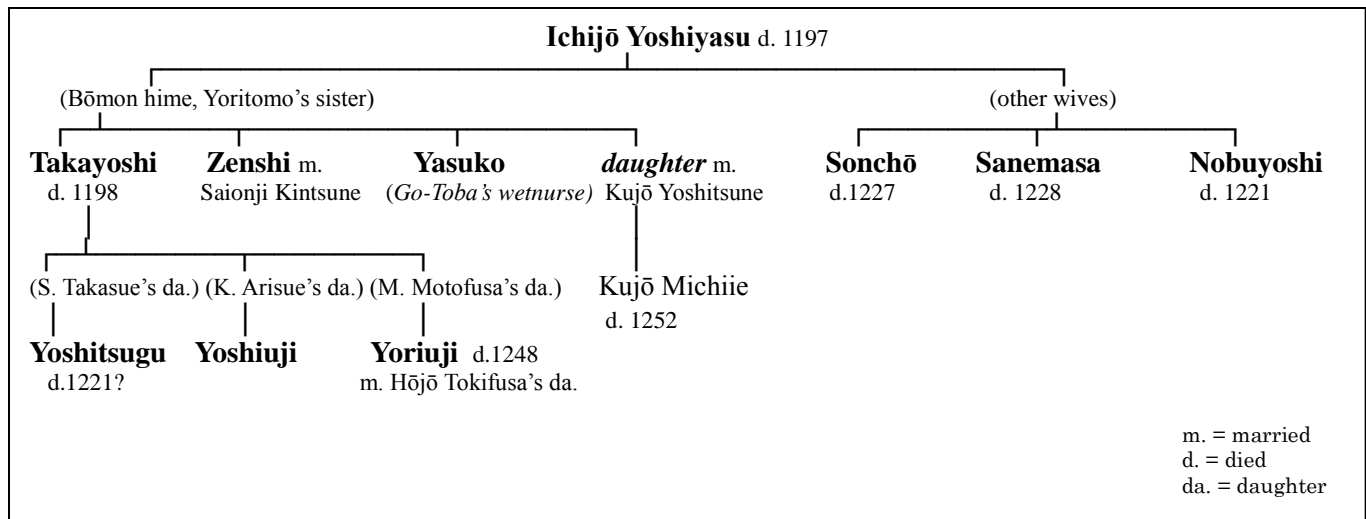
²⁶ *DKR*, p. 6. Yoshiyasu was married to Yoritomo's full sister, Bōmon Hime.

²⁷ Technically Yoritomo volunteered his sister Bōmon Hime (Yoshiyasu's wife) to be Go-Toba's wetnurse, but in actuality their daughter Yasuko was the one sent.

²⁸ Ichijō Yoshitsugu married the daughter of Shijō Takasue, who had been a pro-Heike courtier in the mid-twelfth century.

²⁹ Mass says the Ichijō were "swept aside" from power after Yoritomo's death; *DKR*, p. 10.

Ichijō Family: Kamakura Period



When the Jōkyū Disturbance broke out in 1221, most of the Ichijō family sided with Go-Toba. In many sources they are portrayed as some of the most active anti-Bakufu plotters. In the *Rufubon JKK*, for example, Yoshiyasu's son Sonchō is consistently shown manhandling the pro-Bakufu Saionji family, and Nobuyoshi is shown privy to Go-Toba's deepest war discussions in the *Maedabon JKK*.³⁰ Indeed nearly all remaining sons and grandsons of the Ichijō family were either killed or exiled in connection with the Jōkyū Disturbance, or soon thereafter.³¹ Only one Ichijō remained loyal to the Bakufu. Ichijō Yoriuji, one of Takayoshi's sons, left Kyoto and reported to the Bakufu about Go-Toba's attack on Mitsusue. The *Azuma Kagami* account states that Yoriuji rode directly to Masako's place and said "The Consultant Middle Captain (Nobuyoshi) and most of the rest of my family have joined the ex-emperor; I alone have hastened to you, mindful of old bonds."³² The text never makes it explicit what these old bonds

³⁰ See *Rufubon* sections 15 and 54; *Maedabon* section 11B.

³¹ There is some confusion in the sources about what happened to Yoriuji's brothers, Yoshitsugu and Yoshiuji. The *Jikōjibon JKK* says Yoshitsugu was executed, but the *Azuma Kagami* says it was Yoshiuji. McCullough, *Shōkyūki*, p. 446.

³² McCullough, "The Azuma Kagami Account of the Shōkyū War" p. 108. AK 1221/5/21.

entail. With an eye to marriage ties, however, we can see that one of these bonds would be Yoriuji's marriage to the daughter of Hōjō Tokifusa. Yoriuji alone had a personal connection to the Hōjō, and this is what most likely sealed his loyalty to the Bakufu.³³

3) Ōe Chikahiro 大江親広 (?-1242)

The case of Ōe Chikahiro is another interesting defection. We already saw Chikahiro's father, Ōe Hiromoto, in chapter one as a member of the old guard and one of the most important advisors to the Hōjō. The *Azuma Kagami* narrative gave Hiromoto a large role in the discussions of war after Masako's speech. When the Jōkyū Disturbance broke out, all of Hiromoto's sons stayed loyal to Bakufu except Chikahiro—a reversal of the situation of the Ichijō. Why did this one member of the family choose to fight with Go-Toba?

The answer lies in Chikahiro's unique position as representative of the Bakufu to Kyoto. Chikahiro was one of the so-called “Kyoto *shugo*,” two “governors” of Kyoto stationed by the Bakufu after Sanetomo's death.³⁴ With the crisis in shogunal succession after Sanetomo's death, the Bakufu wisely decided they needed more surveillance on matters in the capital.³⁵ Under the advisement of his two main generals, Fujiwara Hideyasu and Miura Taneyoshi, Go-Toba decided to see if he could get these two representatives of the Bakufu over to his side. Go-Toba began by summoning these two governors to his palace. The *Rufubon Jōkyūki* depicts Chikahiro's arrival in the following scene:

³³ Mass correctly explains it was typical for one member of a family to break from the rest whenever these splits happened, but he does not explain specifically why Yoriuji was the sole adherent to Kamakura. See *DKR*, p. 23.

³⁴ Though they were called *shugo* like the other military governors stationed in the provinces, they were more like guards meant to keep surveillance on goings-on in the capital and had little jurisdiction over local Kyoto law and order. See *DKR* pp. 14 and 23.

³⁵ *Rufubon*, section 17, shows Mitsusue claiming that he and Chikahiro were sent to Kyoto because Yoshitoki suspected something, but this is a retrospective interpolation.

Chikahiro came immediately accompanied by a force of about 50 cavalry... He was called to approach through the palace entrance, and the Retired Emperor spoke directly to him. He said, “Are you on Yoshitoki’s side or are you on mine? Answer me now.” Since Chikahiro was under direct imperial order he knew he did not know what to do, so he said, “Of course I am on Your Majesty’s side.” Then Go-Toba said, “If that is so, sign a vow right now and present it to me.” Since it was difficult to back out, Chikahiro signed the vow and handed it over while still seated there. Thus he joined the palace side.³⁶

This account paints Chikahiro as a reluctant accomplice in Go-Toba’s war. He is put into a difficult spot, being spoken to directly by an emperor—which was a rare honor—and he feels bound to agree.³⁷ The details of this encounter are intriguing, because they are not found in any other text. The earlier *Jikōjibon* version gives no details about Chikahiro’s defection, while the later *Maedabon* depicts a straightforward defection with no uncertainty.³⁸ Yet regardless of the historical accuracy of the *Rufubon* text, authors in the thirteenth century easily conceived of Go-Toba using force to increase his army, which points to how Go-Toba’s army-raising was viewed at the time. Nor is the *Rufubon* the only text to paint Go-Toba as something of a bully.³⁹

Here is relevant Uwayokote’s claim that many warriors simply got caught up in Go-Toba’s forces because they happened to be in Kyoto.⁴⁰ But even if Chikahiro was not hoodwinked into joining Go-Toba, there are a few other reasons we can hazard as to why he might have been amenable to joining the retired emperor’s forces. Mass mentions the likelihood that Chikahiro had become accustomed to a Kyoto way of life, which would make sense as

³⁶ *Rufubon*, section 16.

³⁷ Not to mention that this vow likely was to a deity, and was spiritually binding—the *Maedabon* text makes this religious aspect explicit, see next footnote.

³⁸ *Maedabon*, section 15B-16A. The texts also disagree on an earlier incident. The *Rufubon* plants information that heightens the dramatic irony of Chikahiro’s defection—the text says Chikahiro left for Go-Toba’s palace before he was able to receive a message from the other governor, Mitsusue, warning him against going to the palace. The *Maedabon* records Chikahiro receiving a more neutral message from Mitsusue and then departing without hesitation.

³⁹ Many examples abound: See the *Jikōjibon* quote later in section III, *Maedabon* tr. p. 13; also chapter 2, section II.

⁴⁰ *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 5 (1962), p. 166.

Chikahiro had spent most of his life in the capital.⁴¹ We get two more interesting insights from other sources, however. One is on the distinction between Iga Mitsusue and Ōe Chikahiro, the two Kyoto *shugo*. In the *Rufubon JKK* text, Taneyoshi discusses with Go-Toba what to do with these two Bakufu ambassadors. Taneyoshi guesses Chikahiro will probably answer the summons, but Mitsusue will not because he is related to Yoshitoki.⁴² By this Taneyoshi is referring to the fact that Mitsusue was Yoshitoki's brother-in-law. Again we see the importance of marital ties—Mitsusue's marriage ties to the Hōjō ensure his loyalty, and the fact that Chikahiro has none makes him an easier target.

The second possible factor is more cryptic, but equally suggestive. The *Rokudai Shōjiki* author mentions Chikahiro briefly after his account of Sanetomo's assassination:

After Sanetomo's death about a hundred warriors left the world to join the priesthood. Among them were Former Acting Junior Assistant of Civil Affairs Ōe Chikahiro, who was Director of the Palace Kitchen Lord Hiromoto's oldest son, and Acting Deputy of Dewa Adachi Kagemori... Everyone suspected that these two still bore grudges about what had happened, and even though they supposedly abandoned the concerns of this world they seemed to nurse their resentment all the more.⁴³

The author does not specify what “resentments” he believes Chikahiro and Kagemori had, but it evidently had something to do with Sanetomo's death. If Chikahiro had been loyal to Sanetomo, he may have borne resentment against the Hōjō, or at the least felt little connection with them. We see here again the importance of highly personal and emotional grudges in determining who was receptive to Go-Toba.

4) Nishina Moritomo 仁科盛朝 (?)

⁴¹ *DKR*, p. 23.

⁴² *Rufubon*, section 16.

⁴³ Appendix, pp. 237-238. See also chapter 1, section III above for discussion of Kagemori.

Jeffrey Mass is correct in noting that the texts on the literary side of the scale focus overwhelmingly on the most famous characters, and not the rank-and-file soldiers.⁴⁴ However there is one anecdote in the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon JKK* versions that does depict an ordinary soldier joining Go-Toba. His name is somewhat different in certain sources, but the most common iteration is Nishina Moritomo.⁴⁵ In the *Maedabon* version:

At that time there was a man called Nishina Jiro Moritomo, a landowner in the province of Shinano. He had two sons that were 14 and 15 years old. For some reason he had, he did not even give them capping ceremonies.⁴⁶ At that time they traveled on a pilgrimage with the Retired Emperor, and soon they were able to meet him personally. They talked over various things. Right then Go-Toba said that Moritomo's sons should join his Western Guards. Overjoyed, Moritomo himself also joined the Guards. Yoshitoki heard about this and thought it was very upsetting that a person indebted to the Kanto would, without going through Yoshitoki's counsel, carelessly do something as drastic as pledge service to the capital. He ended up confiscating 500 *chō* of Moritomo's land. When Moritomo heard about this he told Go-Toba, who issued a proclamation that Yoshitoki should return the land. In his reply Yoshitoki said the land should be returned to Moritomo, but then he promptly appointed a new land steward. The Retired Emperor found this upsetting and his mood was not content.⁴⁷

One problem here is obvious: the overlapping layers of authority in the Kamakura period. A Kamakura vassal could also seek out rewards, appointments, and advancements independently via service to Go-Toba.⁴⁸ The narratives focus on Yoshitoki's point of view, for the most part seeming to agree that serving the retired emperor was an abrogation of one's previous ties to Kamakura. But both texts mention an intriguing qualification: Moritomo's crime was that he

⁴⁴ *DKR*, p. 16.

⁴⁵ See *AK* 1221/6/3 and 6/8 for reference to his naming.

⁴⁶ Capping ceremonies (*genpuku* 元服) were rites of passage for young men in which they formally changed into adult clothing and hairstyles

⁴⁷ *Maedabon*, section 10A-10B. In other words, Yoshitoki pretended to go along with Go-Toba's order but promptly did the opposite by appointing a new steward.

⁴⁸ *DKR*, p. 26.

pledged service to Go-Toba “without going through Yoshitoki’s counsel.”⁴⁹ To a thirteenth or fourteenth-century writer, divided loyalties were so common that a situation like Moritomo’s might not necessarily have resulted in a conflict of interest. The *Maedabon* writer, at least, conceived of the possibility that Yoshitoki would not have been as upset or vindictive if Moritomo had first consulted with the Hōjō before joining the Western Guards.

Documentation at the time indeed proves that there were Bakufu vassals who served concurrently as members of Go-Toba’s guards.⁵⁰ One scholar also rightly points out that in many ways the Bakufu actively participated in sending warriors to join Go-Toba’s guards or promoted them for their service to Go-Toba before they had any reason to suspect the retired emperor.⁵¹ The *Azuma Kagami*, however, shows a tendency to rationalize away or ignore the Bakufu’s previous cooperative arrangement with Go-Toba’s western guards. An *AK* entry describing the execution of Go-Toba’s supporters, for example, condemns them for betraying the Bakufu that had given them offices and promotions. But as the scholar mentioned above points out, an earlier *AK* entry reveals that when one of these men originally received his promotion and land rights, the reason he was rewarded (by the Bakufu!) was not for service to Kamakura, but instead for serving Go-Toba bravely in the Western Guards.⁵²

With Moritomo we see some final points that also apply to all the warriors and Go-Toba partisans above. The first is about the sheer variety and complexity of the people who joined Go-

⁴⁹ In *Rufubon* the phrase is “without my approval,” section 11.

⁵⁰ See Mass’ analysis of Katō Mitsukazu on *DKR*, p. 25 and his discussion of the problems the Bakufu faced from these court promotions, p. 27.

⁵¹ Hiraoka Yutaka, “Gotoba’in saimen ni tsuite,” pp. 55-56.

⁵² Hiraoka, pp. 56-57. The *AK* entry is 1221/7/2, and the guard in question is Sasaki Hirotsuna, who petitioned the Bakufu for rewards in his defense of Go-Toba during his time in the Western Guards in the *AK* entry for 1218/11/5. He claimed he shot a violent acolyte in a skirmish while guarding Go-Toba on a pilgrimage to Hiyoshi.

Toba. There was no certain class or type of warrior that typified his army.⁵³ Moreover, *none* of the defection stories emphasize loyalty and esteem for the imperial throne, at least in any active sense. Moritomo seems impressed by Go-Toba's personal charm, but makes no comment about joining him as an ideological movement against the Bakufu—in fact, he wishes to keep his Bakufu perks, not reject them. The second point is that the Moritomo tale suggests that Go-Toba was actively recruiting men with Kamakura ties long before 1221. The anecdote itself seems to take place in 1219 or 1220, but the storytelling mode is of backstory—it might also suggest Moritomo's original advancement to the guards happened even earlier. Certainly more comprehensive studies of this question have claimed Go-Toba drew in Kamakura vassals for 15 years or so before the Disturbance.⁵⁴

Go-Toba's Folly

However long Go-Toba spent plotting against the Bakufu, it seems clear that the actual execution of his plan was both swift and effective. As mentioned above, Go-Toba planned to make an example of the Kyoto shugo if they failed to join him. This left Yoshitoki's brother-in-law, Iga Mitsusue, the first target of Go-Toba's army. Though Mitsusue heard the attack was on the way, he refused to flee and decided to fight to the death. As expected, such a tale of honor, battle, and ritual suicide make Mitsusue's last stand a major focus of many narrative texts, which revel in his loyal sacrifice.⁵⁵

Simultaneously with the attack on Mitsusue, Go-Toba released an edict calling on all warriors in the land to renounce their ties to Kamakura, serve him directly, and kill Hōjō

⁵³ On *DKR*, p. 30, Mass calls Go-Toba's army a "patchwork affair."

⁵⁴ *DKR*, p. 28.

⁵⁵ The story takes up most of Part I of the *Jikōjibon JKK*, though less in the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon JKK*.

Yoshitoki.⁵⁶ The edict states those throughout the various provinces should “attack the Mutsu Governor Taira Lord Yoshitoki’s person” and submit to the retired emperor’s offices for all subsequent appointments.⁵⁷ The language of the edict intriguingly condemns Yoshitoki for increasingly “wearing the name of Shogun” despite not actually holding that office; moreover, the Bakufu under Yoshitoki has forgotten imperial law and its governance “should be called treason.”⁵⁸

Before the next section, it is worth mentioning that this edict was deeply indebted to the legacy of the twelfth century. It recalls both Mochihito’s call to arms against the Taira and Go-Shirakawa’s various attempts to pit warrior groups against each other throughout his tenure as retired emperor. Go-Toba was hoping to use the rift between the Hōjō and the rest of the Bakufu—to push the post-Yoritomo identity crisis to the limit. That is why the text of his edict makes no negative references to Yoritomo or the Minamoto legacy: it is only targeting Yoshitoki as the usurper of the Bakufu.⁵⁹ We see here how indebted Go-Toba was to the legacy of Go-Shirakawa, the master manipulator of warriors. However, Go-Toba’s lack of a viable alternative warrior strong enough to play against Yoshitoki meant that this decision was ultimately a miscalculation.

Barbara Tuchman, the prolific popular historian, wrote a full-length comparative study on government in 1984 called “The March of Folly.” Folly—as she defines it, the pursuit of policy

⁵⁶ See *Kamakura ibun*, 5:14-15, document 2746 for the text of this edict. There is also a slightly garbled version in the *Maedabon JKK*.

⁵⁷ Referring to Yoshitoki as a “Taira” is not necessarily insulting, since the Hōjō were originally a branch of the Taira—though reminding warriors of the Hōjō’s treacherous origins might be an intentional slight. See Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding*, p. 66.

⁵⁸ In the original: “Wearing the name of Shogun” (帶將軍之名); “should be called treason” (可謂謀反).

⁵⁹ Mass points out the shrewdness of this move and the efficiency of Go-Toba’s initial attack, which is a contrast to much historiography that paints Go-Toba as a foolish and reactionary plotter. *DKR*, p. 32-33.

contrary to self-interest—is for Tuchman a problem more specific than mere tyranny or mismanagement. To qualify as folly, government must fulfill three conditions: 1) the ruler's actions need to have been criticized as counter-productive at the time; 2) there must have been viable alternatives to the policies taken; and 3) the folly must persist across multiple political lifetimes—thus not being restricted to one personality.⁶⁰ Tuchman examines a wide range of examples, focusing the bulk of her study on the British loss of the American colonies and the U.S. involvement in Vietnam.⁶¹ Yet despite her overwhelmingly modern focus, Tuchman's study has resonances with our investigation of Go-Toba.

Go-Toba and his gambit against the Kamakura Bakufu fulfills all three conditions for folly: 1) his actions were criticized at the time, by Jien beforehand and other courtiers who expressed condemnation in the war's direct aftermath; 2) the court-Bakufu co-rulership model was working effectively and relying on the position of the Shogun to gain leverage over the Bakufu was a viable alternative to war; and 3) as this section and previous chapters have illustrated, Go-Toba was not alone. Beginning with Sutoku in 1156, retired emperors had tried time and time again to hitch their political success to warrior groups and play different warrior rivals against each other. Even Go-Shirakawa, the expert manipulator, got burned both by warrior allies who turned on him (Kiyomori) and enemies he made supporting the wrong leaders (Yoritomo versus Yoshitsune). Go-Toba likewise thought that if he condemned Hōjō Yoshitoki, another powerful warrior would kill him and resurrect a clientele relationship with Go-Toba. And though it is beyond the bounds of this study, the later emperor Go-Daigo would provide a new wrinkle in the story by imagining that he could forge an alliance with Ashikaga Takauji to topple

⁶⁰ Tuchman, *The March of Folly: From Troy to Vietnam*, pp. 5-6.

⁶¹ Though pre-modern examples, such as the Renaissance popes and the archetypal Trojan horse story are also given intriguing treatments.

the Kamakura Bakufu, without Takauji harboring ambitions of his own.⁶² When it came to manipulating warriors, Japan from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries was indeed characterized by a long chain of *insei* folly.

Conclusions

We have seen that Go-Toba was engaged in a process of pulling fighting men away from their obligations to the Bakufu and towards his sphere of influence. Though scholars have discovered useful information about who these men were and why they joined the retired emperor's cause, two important factors have been mostly overlooked. One is the importance of marital ties in determining a warrior's sympathies or loyalties. The second is the role of deeply personal and emotional resentments, not merely over economic loss, but over past tragedies and bereavement.

A study of Go-Toba's men also shows that his army was not drawn together by any comprehensive ideology of the emperor. The highly personal and idiosyncratic reasons why warriors defected from the Bakufu also ensured that Go-Toba and his generals had, at best, soldiers with a fragmented patchwork of motives. Nor are these tales of defection unique stories of ne'er-do-wells. They also point toward aspects of society that were more commonly shared in the thirteenth century. With two competing institutions and a complex network of interpersonal ties based on marriage, perks, and personal history, it seems probable that no one's loyalties could be counted as given in the thirteenth century—one of the reasons that texts like *Azuma Kagami* laud loyalty in the first place. The sheer complexity of society in this period should give us pause before we tend to categorize medieval loyalty as a simple matter of allegiance to one person or one ideal. Go-Toba did not automatically represent the court any more than Yoshitoki

⁶² Though Andrew Goble might qualify that Go-Daigo fully appreciated the importance of warriors; *Kenmu*, p. 266.

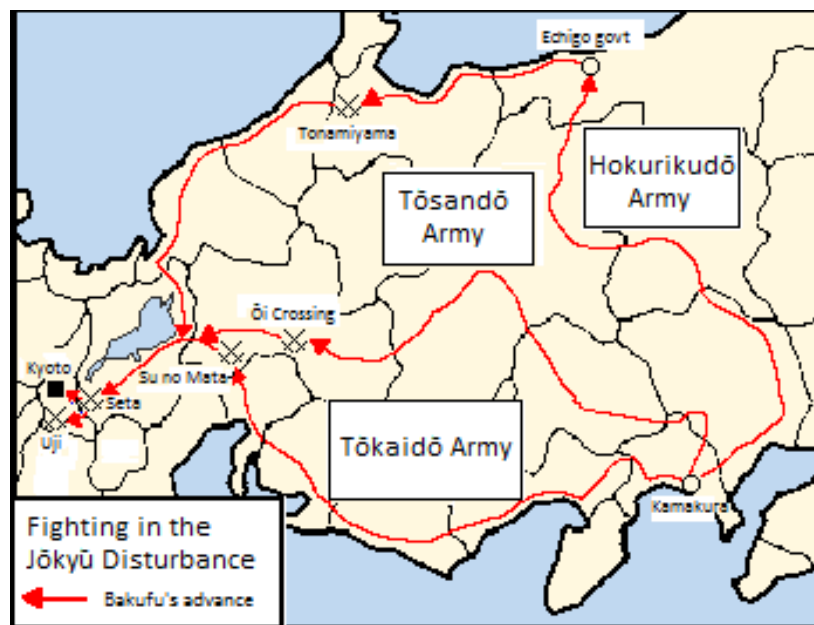
represented the Bakufu. Instead, what we see is the primacy of interpersonal relations, and not abstract loyalty to figures of authority, within a fragmented and changing society.

II. The Numbers Game

The Outline of Battle

We have already seen how the Bakufu responded to Go-Toba's edict in chapter one: the famous scene where Hōjō Masako became a rallying point for the Bakufu, and Yoshitoki and his allies decide that immediate advance on the capital is their only option. The practical details of how they proceeded from there, however, have yet to be evaluated. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Yoshitoki's plan of attack was to split up his forces into three regiments that would proceed toward Kyoto on three completely different routes. The routes corresponded to three of the major road systems of pre-modern Japan: the Tokaidō, the Tosandō, and the Hōkūrikudō (see map below)⁶³:

Map of Jōkyū Battles



⁶³ Modified from a file on the information commons, Japanese Wikipedia.

As the above map illustrates, the three regiments of the Bakufu's army marched along their respective roads until they met with resistance from the Kyoto army. According to the most commonly accepted chronology—naturally, the *Azuma Kagami*—the army set out from Kamakura on 1221/5/22 and made engagements with the Kyoto army starting about fourteen days later on 6/6.⁶⁴ The crossed lines in the map stand for battles between the two forces. The largest battle was the battle of Ōi Crossing where the Tokaido meets the Owari River. After these initial engagements, the Kyoto army withdrew to Uji and Seta, two strategic points on the Uji river that must be crossed before entry into Kyoto. The Bakufu army, meanwhile, re-converged after Su no Mata and on 6/12 had made it to Noji at the base of lake Biwa. From here the Bakufu troops split again, branching to attack both Uji and Seta around 6/13 and 6/14. At Uji and Seta the two sides fought their final battle. Then, once Bakufu troops had succeeded in repelling them across the Uji River, Go-Toba's troops evidently fled and were chased into Kyoto by their pursuers.

The courtier text *Rokudai Shōjiki* presents a stunning vision of this scene as warriors from Kamakura stormed into the capital. The *Rokudai* author describes it thus:

On the fifteenth, a million warriors entered the capital, filling the central and outer capital provinces. Anyone who fled the battlefield was searched out and found, and their heads were cut off—there was no pausing to wipe the blades clean. Horses and humans, both dead and wounded, littered the streets, making it difficult to walk. In the towns and villages there was no house left unscathed, in the fields there were no crops left.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ This outline, drawing largely from Matsubayashi Yasuaki's appendix to the *Rufubon Jōkyūki*, is provided for convenience. Though most sources agree on these dates we must remember that narratives often used dates inconsistently.

⁶⁵ Appendix, p. 242.

Here we see the element of overwhelming and destructive force. In many ways the depiction is of swarms of warriors, as if they are almost an inhuman infestation—an interesting image from a very pro-Bakufu courtier. At the very least we can say that the *Rokudai* account gives us a compelling view of the emotional scale of the tragedy people in Kyoto suffered, but is it also practically true?

Here, as in many places throughout the different sources, the implication is that the Bakufu was able to defeat Go-Toba's army by an overwhelming and unstoppable number of troops. Images of Bakufu warriors being like “clouds” or “mist” add to our image of an unbeatable legion of warriors—in other words, Go-Toba never stood a chance.⁶⁶ Our task in this section is to determine how to interpret the sizes of armies in these texts, and whether even the most embellished texts can point to new ways of understanding the outline and import of the actual fighting between Kyoto and Kamakura in the 6th month of 1221. Was the Bakufu successful primarily because of its large numbers? And did the fighting occur as massive clashes of armies, or small skirmishes of just a few hundred at a time? And finally, why did the Bakufu take the unwieldy approach of splitting up its forces into three regiments crossing over swaths of territory hardly necessary to get to the capital? A more critical investigation of the sources will yield answers to these questions.

Exaggerating Numbers

Let us first address the claims of the *Rokudai Shōjiki*. We must remember that there were stylized conventions for using numbers in East Asian rhetoric, with “ten thousand” (*man/wu* 萬)

⁶⁶ See for example AK 1221/5/26; *Rufubon* section 43; Appendix, p. 241.

being a particularly common choice for a large, totalizing mass in Chinese discourse.⁶⁷ In chapter two I noted that in his discussion of Yoritomo and Kiyomori's effect on the people, the *Rokudai* author consistently used the phrase “ten thousand” as a term for the masses: soothing the worries or aggravating “ten thousand” really meant caring for or oppressing the entire population. Moreover, the phrase “one million” (百萬), predictably, has a history of being used in East Asian discourse for an exaggerated or uncountable number.⁶⁸ Thus the *Rokudai* author's claim that a million warriors flooded the capital is self-conscious hyperbole—a surprising and shocking number merely indicating that the force seemed overwhelming and unstoppable. We do not have to assume the author truly believed a million was a good estimate for the number of Bakufu attackers, but regardless we can see the emotional impact the invasion had on courtiers in Kyoto.

Interestingly, this particular section of *Rokudai* was one of the seven sections borrowed by the *Azuma Kagami* compilers, much like the selection we saw in chapter 1. However, they changed the wording from “a million warriors” to uncounted “eastern warriors.” It is significant that the *AK* compilers toned down the *Rokudai* author's exaggerations—partly, no doubt, to make sure the selection did not contradict the specific number of troops mentioned elsewhere in *AK*, a point to which we will return. Yet it would be wrong to assume that warrior-based texts made no such exaggerations. They did, but only in different ways and for different reasons.

Rather than inventory all of the suspect numbers in the various sources, I want to strategically look at two different types of problems dealing with numbers. The first is the formulaic or repetitive aspect of troop numbers in the tales. The second is the contradictions about numbers we can glean from content and plot—literary devices and narrative details that

⁶⁷ In classical Chinese works philosophers use the phrase “the ten thousand things” as a metaphor for creation; for example, Burton Watson, tr. *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Morohashi quotes an example from the *Shiji* biography of Gaozu: “As far as leading millions of troops and being victorious whether in battling or in siege, I cannot compare to Han Xin.” 連百萬之軍、戰必勝、攻必取、吾不如韓信。

believe some of the large numbers stated within the same texts.

Formulaic Numbers

In the *Jōkyūki* variants, there is a near obsession with detailing the numbers of every force in both the Kyoto and Kanto armies. Yet the formulaic element of these numbers is apparent just as it is in *Rokudai*. The usual formula in the *Jōkyūki* tales is to specify the head general of a regiment, name a few prominent warriors under him (some of whom may also be his relatives), and then specify a blanket number of troops that this elite group led. The oft-used Japanese construction in this formula, *hajime to* (“first of all...”), also reinforces the generality or ambiguity about how many troops are in each division, as if the author is only deigning to mention the first few warriors that came to his mind.⁶⁹ As an example of this formula, in the *Rufubon Jōkyūki* version a list of the Tokaidō army (reputedly 100,000 troops total) reads:

I heard that leading the first rank was the Sagami Governor Yoshifusa, the 2nd rank was Musashi Governor Yasutoki, the third rank was Ashikaga former Musashi Governor Yoshiuji, the fourth rank was Miura Suruga Governor Yoshimura, and the 5th rank was Chiba suke Tanetsuna. Among the warriors who accompanied them were first of all...⁷⁰

What follows is a list of 49 names, occasionally broken up by a mention of their province of origin.

It is significant, however, that the names of soldiers in the narratives comprise only a partial list no matter what-sized force is specified. It makes perfect sense that a narrative writer would not want to get bogged down with complete lists of names for storytelling purposes,

⁶⁹ Farris says this is an especially common pattern for courtier writers, but it clearly happens in warrior-based writings as well. See *Heavenly Warriors*, p. 300.

⁷⁰ *Rufubon*, section 31.

especially when the total number is far too large to be written down completely.⁷¹ However, even when the total number given for a group of warriors is small, the number of specified names is still smaller. For example, in *Rufubon* as Iga Mitsusue is preparing for the attack of Go-Toba's troops, the author mentions "the only ones left were a group of 27"—yet the list of names that follows only totals thirteen.⁷² The ability to suggest large numbers by presenting only a few names is part of the context for the exaggeration of numbers in the tales, for a small increase in listed names can easily be translated (by convention and reader's expectations) into exponential increases of the total.

In the earliest war tale, *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*—the version that William McCullough called an "embryo" of a war tale—we see perhaps the least sophisticated use of numbers out of all the texts. Here numbers are clearly being used repetitively as memory aids for the author(s), suggesting the written text we have was closely tied to an oral tradition.⁷³ First of all, the tendency to express small troop numbers in clean intervals of a thousand is evident throughout the tale.⁷⁴ It is as if the numbers are stock phrases, with the storyteller arbitrarily assigning regiments a general number between one and five thousand in different situations—a nod, perhaps, to realistic variance, but clearly not the case of an observer guessing actual troop numbers. Throughout the *Jikōjibon*, the phrase "a thousand or more" (一千余騎) continues to be

⁷¹ As Brownlee mentions in *Japanese Political Thought*, on p. 73, lists of names had to strike a balance between being readable while including the names of family members that later readers might want to see included.

⁷² *Rufubon*, section 17.

⁷³ Though Barbara Ruch instructively points out the difference between "oral" literature and "vocal" literature, as Japanese storytellers would not necessarily be illiterate. "Medieval Jongleurs," in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, p. 286-87.

⁷⁴ This tactic also shows up in the other war tales, for example *Rufubon*, section 36, where Go-Toba's army is split up into regiments of "about one thousand" or "about two thousand."

utilized as the go-to number for a moderately small dispatch of troops.⁷⁵ Smaller numbers also crop up multiple times in the narrative in clearly formulaic ways. The number thirty-five, for example, is a recurring size given for the number of dead after a skirmish.⁷⁶ The number forty-eight also recurs as the size of the group of great eastern landowners, Mitsusue's age, and the number of dead in another skirmish.⁷⁷

With this context of repetitive and formulaic numbers in mind, consider the intriguing way the *Jikōjibon* presents the total number of troops on both sides. The Bakufu force is said to consist of 70,000 on the Tokaidō, 50,000 on the Tosandō, and 70,000 on the Hokurikudō for a total of 190,000.⁷⁸ The even numbers here and the repetition of 70,000 should already be suggestive of conventionality. Moreover, considering the resonance of the numbers 5 and 7 in Japanese poetics and culture in general—the traditional *waka* is constructed in syllables of 5-7-5-7-7—these would be natural numbers to which a storyteller might resort. Yet what is most fascinating is the size of Go-Toba's army compared to that of the Bakufu:

Army Sizes in *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*

Location of army	Number of Bakufu troops	Number of Go-Toba's troops
On the Tokaidō	70,000	7,000
On the Tosandō	50,000	5,000
On the Hokurikudō	70,000	7,000
Total force ⁷⁹	190,000	19,000

⁷⁵ See *Jikōjibon*: McCullough, pp 190, 193, and 429.

⁷⁶ The use of thirty-five for the number of dead crops up four times in the tale: McCullough pp. 200 and 202 regarding the imperial attack on Mitsusue, p. 425 for Gamba Tarō's skirmish with Uchida Saburō, and p. 437 for the skirmish between Yamada Jirō and the Kodama league.

⁷⁷ McCullough, pp. 198, 205, and 436. Mitsusue's actual date of birth is unknown. 35 and 48 are also adjacent products, representing 5x7 and 6x8 respectively, which might have something to do with their frequency.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.

⁷⁹ Though *Jikōjibon JKK* leaves the Bakufu's total in even numbers, it interestingly also mentions an "exact" total for Go-Toba's troops: 19,326, another nod to realism. McCullough, p. 422.

Go-Toba's breakdown is 7,000 to defend the Tokaidō, 5,000 to defend the Tosandō, and 7,000 to defend the Hōkūrikudō.⁸⁰ In other words, the Kyoto army is exactly 10% of the Bakufu army, and in identical proportions! Clearly this repetitive structure owes more to its memorability than to any probability in historical fact.

Contradictory Plots

It is easy to spot repetitive or formulaic numbers in texts, whether they are documentary or more aesthetic works. What may be more difficult to elucidate are matters of content that may subtly or overtly conflict with the stated numbers in less obvious ways. The next two sections investigate the suggestive insights about numbers we can get when we look at content and narrative structure. By a sustained look at narrative details, we can see how the texts end up belying their own stated numbers through incidental details that clearly point to a different historical reality.

Perhaps the most dramatic scene where warrior numbers are enunciated is in Yoshitoki's message to Go-Toba in the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon Jōkyūki* versions. The Bakufu in these tales has learned of Go-Toba's attack on Iga Mitsusue and has caught the person charged with distributing the edit of attack, the imperial messenger Oshimatsu.⁸¹ All texts report Yoshitoki's acuity in capturing this hapless messenger alive—in some cases after killing other messengers to prevent leaks—and holding on to him until the Bakufu had gotten a head start to Kyoto. After

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 421.

⁸¹ Oshimatsu is featured as Go-Toba's primary messenger in *AK* and all three war tales, though his character varies significantly. In some texts he is a competent and upright servant, in others he is lazy, negligent, and comical—it seems each writer filled him in with whatever archetype seemed most plausible to him.

deciding the time is right to free poor Oshimatsu, Yoshitoki releases him with the following message:

Yoshitoki said, “Go back to the palace and say the following: ‘I have throughout the past been loyal to the sovereign and have done nothing unrighteous. Despite this, because of people who slandered the throne, I have been blamed by the sovereign, but I won’t debate this. Since you are fond of warriors, my brother Tokifusa, and my sons Yasutoki and Tomotoki are leading 100,000 troops on the Tokaidō, 50,000 on the Tosandō, and 40,000 on the Hokuriku: in all, 190,000 cavalry I am sending to you. See that you fight them well! And if you still don’t think this is bad enough, my third son Shigetoki and my fourth Masamura will lead 20,000 thousand cavalry, and I myself will hurry to you!’ Say that.” And then, Yoshitoki sent out Oshimatsu.⁸²

The first interesting point is the total number of troops. The total in the *Rufubon* is identical to that in the *Jikōjibon* version: 190,000 cavalry. But instead of the repetitive makeup of 7:5:7, the breakdown of troops is perhaps more realistically in a proportion of 10:5:4, with the most important route to the capital (the Tokaidō) garnering a much larger share of the overall force. In other words, a number (190,000) that was originally constructed as an easy number for an oral storyteller to remember has now been borrowed and replicated in a later text, but in a very different context. Though the author(s) modified the breakdown of troops to match a more realistic assessment of the relative strength each division might have, we should not forget the fictive element in how that total number was first constructed.

The second interesting point about this scene is Yoshitoki’s boasting tone: his language is meant to strike fear into Go-Toba and his retinue with the threat of an unstoppable, overwhelming force. Yoshitoki cannot resist mentioning an additional 20,000 in reserve merely, it seems, as additional salt in the wound. The reference to the retired emperor’s love of warriors is a surprisingly trenchant and sarcastic rejoinder as well. Yoshitoki’s threats are so overconfident that he essentially dares Go-Toba to further provoke the Bakufu for no other reason than to compound his ultimate comeuppance. There is no ambiguity about the size of the

⁸² *Rufubon*, section 34.

Bakufu's force or the threat implied by these numbers—in terms of pre-modern elite warfare, this is an unstoppable legion. Note also that in the convention of warfare only cavalry is counted—it is likely that each family of horsemen might also be bringing servants or foot soldiers to aid in battle, so the force implied could be even bigger.⁸³

What is interesting for our purposes, though, is the discussion that happens a few passages earlier, before Yoshitoki's deployment of this reputed force of nearly 200,000. As we saw in the case study of chapter one, warrior-centered texts agreed that the Bakufu chain of command had to debate their response to Go-Toba's attack. What may not have been emphasized in chapter one, however, is that all of these discussions, except for the one in the idiosyncratic *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*, give the impression that the Bakufu leaders were actually worried they were not prepared to meet Go-Toba's challenge. In *Rufubon Jōkyūki*, the same text quoted above, the suggestion to stall is made by Yoshitoki's son Yasutoki in the following account:

The Musashi Governor Yasutoki said, "For such a war as this, how could we manage with a small force? If we push things back two or three days, I would prefer to summon the young warrior bands from farther out in the country." Then Yoshitoki got very upset, and said, "What a despicably common thing to say! I have shown nothing but loyalty to the sovereign and have done nothing unlawful. Since the order making me an enemy of the court was based on people's slander, even if I take multitudes of cavalry with me, if I am going against the mandate of heaven, should I be able to defeat the sovereign? I will simply trust in my karma."⁸⁴

Yasutoki is actually concerned that the Bakufu has *too few* troops to fight Go-Toba. Notice also Yoshitoki's response: "*Even if I take multitudes of cavalry with me*, if I am going against the mandate of heaven, should I be able to defeat the sovereign?" (emphasis added). Yoshitoki's

⁸³ Wayne Farris estimates that in this period each horseman would routinely bring two to three foot soldiers; *Heavenly Warriors* p. 302. Karl Friday also mentions that foot soldiers were a part of warrior bands acting in mixed units; in other words, connected to cavalry and not independent infantry: *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, pp. 40 and 104-105. In Peter Hunt, p. 33, we see a similar situation in Greek warfare, where slaves or Helots were often mentioned but not counted.

⁸⁴ *Rufubon*, section 30.

point is that he could *not* win by sheer force of numbers—the battle has already been decided by karma. Moreover the pattern “even if” (*tomo*) in classical Japanese is only used in hypothetical situations: Yoshitoki is essentially saying that he does *not* have “multitudes,” but that the Bakufu’s weakness does not matter if their cause is just. And this admission of weakness is only a few lines away from the scene quoted above. So in one scene, Yoshitoki and his son are worried about not having enough troops, and in the next he is boasting about sending 190,000. What should we make of this contradiction?

It is inconceivable that the Bakufu would have worried about their ability to get enough troops if, in setting out abruptly the next day, they could magically summon 190,000 men. Readers might wonder how many troops they could have assembled with time and planning, if 190,000 were so easy to obtain.⁸⁵ The cognitive dissonance required to believe in an underdog and threatened Bakufu suddenly becoming an unstoppable powerhouse is one of the contradictory conventions of war tales, and it should not be hard to see the resonance of this narrative tactic even, say, in modern-day blockbuster films. In order to inspire awe and excitement, the heroes must show impressive force; yet to command sympathy and moral approval, they must also be challenged and beset by unjust and impossible odds.⁸⁶ I argue that the contradictory impulses in these storytelling styles are early signs of the mythologizing of the warriors in Japanese history: a belief in fighters who are brave, loyal, powerful, and yet sympathetic to readers. As we will see in chapter five, this sympathy will especially become more ambiguous over time.

⁸⁵ Mass, drawing from *AK*, states that the Bakufu was able to recruit along its journey west after summoning troops directly from eastern vassal families; DKR, pp. 34-35. If this is the case, the sources might be betraying even more invention by imagining Yoshitoki already cognizant of the total number of troops at his disposal.

⁸⁶ A similar tactic is used in depictions of Yoritomo: see *Rokudai Shōjiki*: Appendix, p. 227; Farris, p. 300, says *AK* routinely makes the odds worse for Yoritomo as a literary device of sympathy.

Fascinatingly, the number 190,000 is replicated again in the *Azuma Kagami* version of the events—with the same breakdown as the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon* version: 100,000 on the Todaiko, 50,000 on the Tosandō, and 40,000 on the Hokurikudo.⁸⁷ Survey histories, articles, and other scholarly works in English and in Japanese up to the present have quoted the number 190,000, but I want to argue that almost all of these sources have been drawing from *Azuma Kagami*, and not the war tales. For example, even competent scholars like Yuge Shigeru exemplify a certain reverence for *AK* against other “less reliable” texts. In his footnote for the previously mentioned scene in *Rokudai Shōjiki* where “a million” warriors enter the capital, Yuge explains that the number is not literal, but merely indicates “a tremendous force.”⁸⁸ He then adds the correct number (190,000) citing *Azuma Kagami* alone. In other words, while the *RS* author’s number is clearly an exaggeration, the *AK* number is historical fact. As should be clear from the above discussion, such thinking ignores where this number came from and the context of other war tale literature created soon after the Disturbance occurred. With how often this figure has been repeated *ad nauseum*, it is almost as if the number has taken on a life of its own.

Conclusions

Many scholars in Japanese and English have taken war tales to task for their exaggeratory numbers, especially in the case of the more famous tales like *Heike Monogatari* that have benefitted from centuries of popular and scholarly attention. Most historians in English now agree that the troop numbers in narrative works are exaggerated, though this consensus has been drawn together by a haphazard nexus of different methodologies and categories of data. Thomas Conlan, for example, compiles all the named references in warrior’s petitions for reward to glean

⁸⁷ *AK* 1221/5/25.

⁸⁸ Yuge, p. 86.

overall warrior numbers for different stages of the fourteenth century—each stage not exceeding 4,000 total.⁸⁹ Karl Friday, who is interested in the structure of warrior networks and how they operated on the ground, recognizes the implausibility of the exaggerated numbers but is less interested in specifying exactly how inaccurate he thinks they are.⁹⁰ Of the English-language historians interested in medieval Japanese warfare, Wayne Farris has done the most to survey all the different methods available for empirical study of army sizes. By systematically reviewing the demographic approaches of Japanese historians and adding his own insights, Farris concludes that the largest army that could ever have been summoned in the thirteenth century could not have exceeded the range of 15 to 18,000 troops total (including foot soldiers).⁹¹

All of these scholarly approaches rely on a combination of external evidence and common sense. Yet the plot contradictions, formulaic numbers, and repetitive structures in Jōkyū literature give us *internal* evidence—clues contained within the texts themselves—that such numbers do not make sense. Such an attention to textual details also prevents us from falling into the opposite trap of relying automatically assuming all numbers in pre-modern texts are suspect, and instead be able to separate areas of particular exaggeration from the rest.

III. Battle Tactics

The goal for this final section is deceptively simple: how are warriors actually portrayed in different sources, and what are the real battle tactics that are being described in these tales?

⁸⁹ Conlan, *State of War*, chapter two, especially pp. 48-57.

⁹⁰ See *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, where Friday says warrior bands were “relatively constant” from the mid-tenth to late thirteenth century, p. 39; also in the conclusion to chapter four he explains how the numbers are “problematic” but only in general terms, pp. 128-130.

⁹¹ See *Heavenly Warriors*, pp. 336-341.

Shifting our gaze from how warriors are being named or numbered to how they are being shown in action needs some explanation. Lists and names can be easily invented, exaggerated, or modified through retelling and rewriting. Speeches, too, are moments in literature in which creativity can become limitless, as we saw in chapter one. However, incidental details of how life was lived, what kind of mechanics are involved in solving a task, and conventions for social (and anti-social) interaction are much harder to re-invent.

If we imagine the process of stories being written down, either from oral traditions, personal recollections, or hearsay, it is these incidental moments describing small events and processes that are the least likely to be embellished or exaggerated. When it came to the nitty-gritty details of how a battle was won or lost, authors betray their own knowledge and familiarity with military tactics that, as many have argued, had not changed since the early days of the Japanese state.⁹² There are, perhaps, some things in each place and time that simply cannot be imagined. The specific tactics of mounted cavalry warfare were so ingrained for medieval Japanese writers that they could not imagine anything else.

Anatomy of a Jōkyū Battle

Let us investigate a representative battle from the *Rufubon Jōkyūki* war tale to see how battles seem to have been fought and won in the early thirteenth century. The incident is one I have titled the Battle of Ōi Crossing.

⁹² Conlan, *State of War*, p. 69; Friday, *Samurai, Warfare and the State*, p. 133.

As you can see in the chart below, this battle takes up eight sections of the *Rufubon* text and about four sections of the *Maedabon* text, amounting to a little more than 2500 characters in *Rufubon* and a little less than 1500 characters in *Maedabon*.⁹³

The Battle of Ōi Crossing in *Rufubon* and *Maedabon Jōkyūki*

Episode synopsis	<i>Rufubon</i> section	<i>Maedabon</i> section
Takeda Kogoro's plans	40	44B-45A
<i>River reconnaissance</i>	40	--
Initial attack on Ōi crossing	40	45A-46A
<i>Naito Hachi's survival</i>	41	--
Tosandō's advance	42	46A-47A
Capital warriors retreat	43	47A
<i>Takeda Shichiro challenges Chikugo Rokuro</i>	44	--
Ōtake Ietō challenges Iwate clan	45	47A-47B
Ōtsuma Tarō leaves to die	46	47B-48A
Taneyoshi's attempt to reinforce is overruled	47	48A-48B

In this scene one section of the Bakufu's forces, the Tosandō army, has approached Ōi crossing, a strategic point along the Owari River where Go-Toba's troops have set up defenses. Much of pre-modern warfare in East Asia revolved around defending or attacking strategic bridges, shallows of rivers, or mountain passes—in other words, narrow bottlenecks representing the only avenue for entry into a certain region. Ōi crossing is one such bottleneck, and the Owari River that this clearing intersects is the only natural landmark preventing passage further west for anyone heading toward Kyoto on the Tosandō. It is also, significantly, the last area of the Owari (today Kiso) River that is crossable before several miles of high-ridged banks and swift waters; an area of the river at one point euphemistically named the “Japan Rhine.”⁹⁴

⁹³ This portioning of the texts needs some comment. The *Rufubon* text, taken primarily from the version in the *SNKBT* vol 43 appendix (pp. 371-405), is separated by the editors into 108 sections, dividing up these sections of about 1-3 paragraphs of modern printed characters based on content—thus sections are not uniform in size. The *Maedabon* text, in *Maedakebon Jōkyūki*, merely indicates sections based on what pages they took up in the original extant manuscript. They label each page with a number and then オ for front and ウ for back, which I have changed to ‘A’ and ‘B’. See the *hanrei*, p. 3.

⁹⁴ McCullough, *Shōkyūki*, p. 211 footnote 200.

The Tosandō army, according to *Rufubon JKK*, is headed by two generals: Takeda Gorō Nobumitsu (武田信光) and Ogasawara Nagakiyo (小笠原長清).⁹⁵ As they set up camp near Ōi crossing, three messengers from Go-Toba arrive to try and persuade them to join him. Takeda and Ogasawara kill two of the messengers and send the other to report back. An interesting anecdote follows. Takeda Gorō meets privately with his son, Kogorō, and tells him to ignore family ties and chain of command and secretly be the first to cross the river. So Kogorō begins to make his own plans for crossing the river and engaging the enemy on the west bank leaving Ogasawara unawares.

The following scene is a fascinating look at military reconnaissance that gives much insight into the nature of early medieval warfare in Japan:

Among Takeda Kogorō's vassals was a man named Mutō Shingorō. His childhood name had been Aramusha. He was a very excellent swimmer. Kogorō called to him and said, "Go to Ōi Crossing and paddle out into the rapids. Get a good look at what the enemy is like," and with that he sent him out. Shingorō swam out, and when he was finished [scouting] he came back saying, "I waded out as you said. However, the banks on the western side of the river are very high, so it will be difficult to use horses there. On the other side, for 7 or 8 *tan* there are caltrops planted, scattered tripping stakes in the river, and brush-barricades spread out. And for 4 or 5 *tan* there are hooks that I took out and removed. I cut the tripping ropes and broke the barriers, and I left a mark for the best place to run up the horses. Follow it when you cross the river." Takeda Kogorō, since he now knew exactly what was ahead, proceeded to the edge of the river.⁹⁶

Here we get a good idea of the kind of defenses the Kyoto army might have used to stop the Bakufu's advance. Caltrops and hooks would be metal devices planted in the ground to injure horses and foot soldiers while on the banks, and tripping ropes would be used to topple horses as

⁹⁵ Though the text almost always refers to them simply as "Takeda Goro" and "Ogasawara Jirō," their common names. See Webb, *Research in Japanese Sources*, chapter 4 for a good overview of the different naming conventions in pre-modern Japanese society.

⁹⁶ *Rufubon*, section 40.

they waded through the river.⁹⁷ The object is to make the attacking army more vulnerable to defensive arrow volleys, either by dismounting cavalry, injuring soldiers, or simply slowing down the momentum of attackers by forcing them to watch their step. By sending his vassal as a scout to scope out the river bank, Takeda Kogorō receives a huge advantage—exponentially so when Shingorō takes the initiative to remove many of the booby traps himself before reporting back. Many if not all elements of this reconnaissance mission might be literary invention—one might wonder, perhaps, how Shingorō was able to remove all obstacles and mark a horse path without ever being spotted by Go-Toba's troops on the other bank! But even if Kogorō did not actually take such steps, these details are certainly common elements of warfare that writers would find plausible based on their experience and knowledge of contemporary warfare.⁹⁸

A few points from this reconnaissance mission are especially significant for understanding the limited scope of warfare in thirteenth-century Japan. First, it seems clear the aim of the defenders is not to prevent crossing by the enemy, but merely to slow him down. Brush-barricades (*sakamogi*), for example, are temporary defenses meant to allow attackers more time to shoot arrows without being exposed themselves.⁹⁹ They are not solid impenetrable defenses. Therefore there was always the possibility of falling back to a different position, as we will see evidently happened quite often with the Kyoto army. This is certainly not siege warfare

⁹⁷ Caltrops are sharp spiked objects that would impede attacking people and horses. The word *hishi* originally refers to natural plants called water caltrops (a type of water chestnut) that grow naturally sharp, but here instead refer to man-made metal devices. See *Samurai, Warfare and the State* for another instance of caltrops used, p. 119.

⁹⁸ In this I agree with Barbara Ruch that the everyday details in war tales give us very reliable information about medieval Japan. "Medieval Jongleurs," *Japan in the Muromachi Age*.

⁹⁹ The English word "abatis" would also fit but seems archaic. These are branches or whole logs strewn out as a barricade or rudimentary fortification to protect defenders and slow down attackers' advances. See Karl Friday's brief discussion of them in *Samurai, Warfare and the State* on pp. 123-124.

where defenders stay and fight to the death.¹⁰⁰

It is also important to remember the scope of the bank's defenses described by Kogorō's scout. Kogorō's vassal explicitly states that the bank is very high and it would be "difficult to use horses there." Thus it would seem the Tosandō warriors have a fairly narrow swath of land on which to engage the enemy. The obstacles planted by the Kyoto army are described as taking up either 4-5 *tan* (roughly 44-55 meters) or 7 to 8 *tan* (roughly 77 to 88 meters). So the Kyoto army was expecting the attacking army to be fewer than 100 meters wide. Kogorō's troops may not have been so restricted as to advance single-file, but certainly the implication is that they were not advancing *en masse*.

Moreover, the attackers are not thinking in terms of attacking with overwhelming force. Confronted with this difficulty, Kogorō could conceivably move on to a grander attack plan, such as fording the river, creating a small bridge, or crossing at a different place and surrounding the enemy in a pinchers formation. Yet such larger-scale efforts, requiring more coordination and planning, are not hazarded. The spontaneous nature of Kogorō's advance is clear. Shingorō has simply marked the least difficult place for horses, and Kogorō's force will proceed conventionally, even if it means letting in only a line of cavalry at a time. Kogorō knows he will be in a vulnerable position, but desires to proceed anyway.

Some might argue this is simply a stubborn samurai mindset that prized glory and bravery over victory—that Kogorō believes he is embarking on a suicide mission. It is true that the passage makes positive references to dying in battle and not retreating no matter the cost. I would argue, however, that there is an element of practicality in Kogorō's thinking: he knows he is approaching a relatively small force, so Kogorō knows his men will eventually break through

¹⁰⁰ See Friday, p. 121-22 and Conlan, p. 72, about the frequency of escape in medieval warfare. Jien also refers to this warrior habit during the raid against Hiraga Tomomasa, saying "his rear was purposely kept open for an escape." Brown and Ishida, p. 181.

the defenses. Let us see how the *Rufubon* describes the actual outline of the battle at Ōi crossing.

The text first describes a standoff between Kogorō's two vassals who first crossed the river and one of Go-Toba's warriors. Go-Toba's man, Ōtsuma Taro, realizes one of his attackers, Chino Gorō, is from his home province. He shoots down the other but says he will take mercy on Chino; however, this is merely perfunctory generosity, because Ōtsuma has no problem shooting down his compatriot's horse:

Ōtsuma said "I leave you to the mercy of Daimyōjin, but I will kill your horse," and he shot. The arrow went wide and stuck deep underneath Rokuro's left saddle, and his horse tumbled down. Six foot soldiers drew their swords and jumped over the barrier-logs, and came and killed Chino.¹⁰¹

In the cavalry-centered combat of thirteenth-century Japan, if a warrior loses his mount he is at the mercy of hand-to-hand combat.¹⁰² Foot soldiers, presumably those who are vassals or servants of Ōtsuma himself, seem to come out of the woodwork—literally—whenever a man is wounded or dismounted for the easy kill; here they are shown jumping over the brush-barricades to kill Chino. Ōtsuma also single-handedly takes down a few more of Kogorō's men. Interestingly, no other Kyoto warriors are mentioned in this first attack. The scene is described as a showdown between one Kyoto warrior (and his foot soldiers) and the first few Bakufu attackers. Indeed, much of the battles in these scenes revolve around small standoffs of just a few men at a time.

After the first charge, Takeda Kogorō leads about a hundred of his troops across the river. The text says they suffered heavy arrow fire, but pushed onward nevertheless. Takeda Gorō, Kogorō's father, also shouts at him from across the bank not to turn back, or else he will face death by his own father's hand! Their complicated father-son relationship notwithstanding,

¹⁰¹ *Rufubon*, section 40.

¹⁰² As Conlan points out in *State of War*, cavalry was supreme in medieval Japan, and mounted warriors were only at risk when they were restricted in movement or forced to dismount; pp. 71-72.

Kogorō manages to cross the river before the other general Ogasawara realizes he has been upstaged, at which he quickly gets his troops together to cross as well. The text says the Kyoto warriors fought them fiercely, but in the end they lost their will to fight and retreated.

The picture of Jōkyū battle that is emerging from this war tale depiction is of a small skirmish over a strategic chokepoint. The Tosandō army, led by Takeda Kogorō, advanced with four brazen men in the first charge, and then about a hundred led by Kogorō himself. Only after this force had started making inroads up the west bank did the second general, Ogasawara, send his troops. The Kyoto warriors seem to have been overrun by a relatively small contingent of Bakufu forces.

Effective Reinforcements

A few final battle scenes focused on reinforcements shed additional light on the size and tactics of these armies. Once the Tosandō forces start breaking through, the *Rufubon* text turns back to the point of view of the Kyoto armies. First, the author mentions that Kyoto warriors stationed further downstream from Ōi crossing saw arrows and wounded horses floating past them. They assume (correctly) that their allies have been defeated and decide to flee. So at this point things look fairly dismal for Go-Toba's troops. However, the text focuses in on the Kyoto warriors who decide to turn around and fight, or summon reinforcements from further away.

One warrior, Fujiwara Chikayori, decides to reinforce the troops at Ōi and takes about 50 cavalry with him. He engages the Bakufu warriors multiple times, but in the end he decides “it was fruitless” and retreats.¹⁰³ But he is not the last to attempt to counter-attack. An interesting anecdote follows where Miura Taneyoshi, Go-Toba's general I discussed in section I, hears Ōi is

¹⁰³ *Rufubon*, section 43. Literally 終ニハ可叶モ無レバ

lost and decides himself to come with reinforcements:

So he took 500 men... and they hurried toward Ōi crossing. What the Noto Governor Hideyasu said was, “Ōi crossing is already defeated, and a great mass of warriors from the Tosandō have broken through. To be intercepted from behind, or to be surrounded in their midst would be a grave situation. I do not believe what the Heikuro Lord Police Inspector [Taneyoshi] has said is right. Our Sovereign has said, ‘If the Owari River is lost, retreat and defend Uji and Seta.’ As for me, I will take my leave and go there.” And with that he withdrew. Taneyoshi thought this was unfortunate, but since his superior had spoken this way, he had no strength [to disobey] and withdrew.

Taneyoshi is ordered by Hideyasu not to reinforce the troops at Ōi crossing as he wished, but instead to fall back to Uji and Seta closer to Kyoto. Here we see some important pieces of information. Go-Toba’s strategy here is not to defend Ōi at all costs, but to concentrate his forces closer to the capital. This suggests, as I alluded to before, that we are talking about skirmishes at strategic points and not decisive battles. Further, the sympathetic tone of the passage suggests Taneyoshi is in the right—he is being cast as the loyal remonstrator against a woodenheaded superior, a narrative device with a long history in East Asia.¹⁰⁴ The author, and reader, are supposed to agree that Taneyoshi should have taken his force to stop the enemy at Ōi. The implication here is that, while earlier Chikayori was unable to turn back the enemy with his fifty reinforcements, Taneyoshi might have been successful with his five hundred! If five hundred troops could make a difference in the battle of Ōi crossing, how can we possibly imagine the Tosandō army was composed of 50,000 troops?

The *Maedabon* version of this battle makes the small size of the Tosandō force more explicit. As in *Rufubon*, Kogorō himself leads a hundred troops, but then the text mentions another 1,000 cross the river at the height of battle. Then the text has Ogasawara lead the second group with about five hundred.¹⁰⁵ So the total number of troops actually shown engaging in

¹⁰⁴ Foundational texts in the Chinese canon such as *Zuo zhuan* and *Shiji* feature the remonstrance of loyal officials and subordinates prominently.

¹⁰⁵ These sections in *Maedabon*, 45A-47A.

battle is 1,600. Even if we imagine that Takeda Gorō, the father, has remained on the east bank with his own troops during most of this battle, the total number of troops advancing though Ōi would most likely only be 2 to 3,000 mounted men, if we only judged by the forces that were actually described. If a force of this size encountered somewhat heavy losses in the first attack, as the text assumes, then it would be safe to say that Taneyoshi's five hundred cavalry might indeed have made a difference in holding back the Tosandō army—certainly much more likely than holding back 50,000.

With this idea of limited skirmishing warfare, the three-pronged attack of the Bakufu finally makes sense. The object of battle was not to surround the enemy, trap them, or meet them in an open plain for a decisive battle. Instead, the aim of battle was river-hopping: jump from strategic point to strategic point. It was like a game of chess where each piece was free to pursue its own targets: each unit of the Bakufu's army is acting independently of the others to unravel Go-Toba's defenses one by one, with the only common goal being to reach Kyoto and force Go-Toba himself into surrender.¹⁰⁶ As we saw with the rivalry between the Takeda and Ogasawara, even the lead generals of an entire Bakufu regiment were not necessarily acting in accord or with any unified plan of attack.

But as I alluded to before, both attackers and defenders expected war to unfold this way. Moreover, the landscape, economy, and society of thirteenth-century Japan could not have supported massive armies of a hundred thousand. 50,000 soldiers could not even have fit at Ōi crossing, much less have waged successful battle there. The land between the Kanto and the Kinai plains is too mountainous for open-field battle. It would actually make sense to split up one's troops into smaller divisions, for large armies would get backed up at these various

¹⁰⁶ See Friday's assertion that troops acted with very little direction from commanders in early medieval warfare. *Samurai, Warfare, and the State*, p. 112.

bottlenecks and become easier targets for the defending side. I would like to argue that rather than considering them incomplete or half-baked, the kinds of tactics we see in the battle of Ōi crossing, as well as other places throughout the Jōkyū sources, were completely appropriate for thirteenth-century Japan.

Conclusions

In this section we saw interesting insights not into the mere numbers of troops, but also into how Jōkyū warfare was actually fought. Small skirmishes of a few hundred to a thousand troops at a time characterized warfare in this period. Rather than coordinated strategy involving large masses of troops, semi-independent regiments organized around families would advance along traditional road networks and hop from one strategic bottleneck to the next. Defenders would likewise flee once battle had turned against them, since they always had a position further back to which they could retreat. These battle narratives show the likelihood that the war between the Bakufu and Go-Toba was decided by skirmishes of small forces rather than overwhelming force, as even texts which cited tens of thousands of warriors showed them acting in much smaller units.

Finally, I think we see some intriguing cultural elements at work here. The posturing of warriors in the war tales—in this section and the last, whether it was the boasting speech of Yoshitoki, the awe and grandeur of representations of the Bakufu, or the fearful enumerations of “clouds” of warriors—represent the beginning of the process of mythologizing the warriors in the thirteenth century. Though often reflecting an ideal or attractive image of warriors that did not always match the details of their narratives, writers in the post-Jōkyū age began to imagine strange and new features of a society that was no longer in line with courtier values. As we will see in chapter five, this process of mythologization also increasingly reflected real changes in

Japanese society as warriors did indeed start to live up to some of the myths that were growing around them.

What have we learned about the Jōkyū Disturbance and medieval Japanese society through the narrative depictions of the events of 1221?

- 1) One's loyalties in the Jōkyū Disturbance, and in the thirteenth century more broadly, centered on interpersonal ties and idiosyncratic experiences, not on abstract ideals.
- 2) Go-Toba was successful building an army because of his exploitation of these personal ties, but the patchwork nature of his supporters was also the biggest hindrance to a unified army
- 3) Jōkyū battles were not sieges of huge armies, but small skirmishes of semi-independent groups that centered on strategic bottlenecks. Exaggeration of warrior numbers in the narratives highlight storytellers' need to provide entertainment, but also reflect the beginning of the mythologizing of the warriors in Japan.

Through these three sections on the planning, outbreak, and military engagement of the Jōkyū Disturbance, I have tried to show the highly fractured and complex nature of society in early medieval Japan. As I have demonstrated before, matters of plot, style, and content are just as important as informational details when historians attempt to analyze texts to gain historical insights. The complexity of the Jōkyū event, the limited scope of medieval armies, and the haphazard nature of battle tactics allow us to challenge the inevitability of “the rise of the warriors.” Go-Toba's failed war should be seen as a preventable folly, and not an inevitable failure. Rather than representing a doomed court challenging a domineering Bakufu, Go-Toba was embarking on a highly personal and deeply fragmented campaign—a private war that was only public in its devastating effects.

Chapter 4 – Shock Waves

A Courtier's Despair

In 1223, two years after the Jōkyū Disturbance, a retired courtier made his first trip from Kyoto to Kamakura along the Tokaidō circuit. Because he wrote down an account of his travels, called *Kaidōki* (海道記), we know a good deal about his trip and a few things about him, though his identity is still a mystery.¹ At Kikukawa he visited the pillar where Nakamikado Muneyuki, one of Go-Toba's retinue, had written his final poem before his execution by the Bakufu. The author was overcome with grief and lost himself in memories of the Jōkyū tragedy:

How appalling! In the middle of the sixth month of Jōkyū 3, there was a wind through the realm, and the waves crashed against it in the sea. The generals of rebellion flew from the capital, and warriors from the east came to fight. Violent thunder shook the clouds—the moon and sun were covered, and wild warriors moved over the land brandishing their power through bow and sword. At that time the wind forgot the mountain song of ten thousand years, and instead screamed through the branches. Waves muddied the water of the river that had always been pure. The spring of the Fensheng River at Ci Mountain flowed from the heights down to the western sea; the flowers of the families of ministers and nobles fell and were scattered far eastward to the Kanto. Not only that, but the light of the moon² parted from the empresses' palaces and settled many places. Separated by a ceiling of clouds, living in under the sky in their journey, imperial princes listened to the sound of the bamboo at Jilong Mountain and were distressed; losing even the support of the wind, they moaned in alien lands.³

As I mentioned in chapter 2, there was good reason for people living after the Jōkyū Disturbance to be deeply shocked by what had happened. The author of this travelogue is clearly distraught by the effect of Go-Toba's defeat on the people of Kyoto. In this he shows perhaps an even more insular court perspective than Jien or the author of *Rokudai Shōjiki*, who tended to

¹ *Kaidōki*, SKTBT 51 p.70. We know he was a retired courtier writing near the age of 50 who evidently had become a mountain recluse. Because of the author's strong sympathy for Fujiwara Nakamikado Muneyuki, the editors posit the author may be Muneyuki's brother Yukinaga, but this remains uncertain.

² An epithet for emperors. See introduction to chapter 2, where the *Rokudai* author refers to serving the "glow of the moon" at court.

³ *Kaidōki*, pp. 91-92.

remain even-handed in their discussions of Kamakura. Not so for the author of *Kaidōki*. For him the Bakufu fighters were “wild warriors” who were “brandishing their power through bow and sword.” Besides these bursts of violent memory, his focus is wholly on the tragic circumstances of people at court: Ministers and nobles scattered to the Kantō to suffer exile or execution; the banishment of princes and former emperors. The sadness and shock are likened to wind and waves, thunder and polluted rivers.

Like the author of *Rokudai Shōjiki*, the *Kaidōki* author is responding to the shock of the Jōkyū Disturbance, but in his own way. Though tropes of wind and thunder punctuate his memoir just as they do in the introduction to *RS*, they have a different valence and a different personal trajectory. For the *Rokudai* author, the shock of the Disturbance awoke him from his complacency and motivated him to action—to write down his history and take a concerted interest in worldly affairs once more. By contrast, the author of this travelogue seems numbed into powerlessness. Later on, he comments:

The saying that all who come together must part was truly right before our eyes. I thought with deep sadness that all, whether Kshatriyas or Sudras, end up in the afterworld. Even though we grieve now, no one can help them.⁴

From the *Kaidōki* we get a sense of the meaningless sadness of existence: what had happened was unfortunate and lamentable, but ultimately a situation that cannot be helped. This sense of powerlessness, like the *Rokudai* author’s motivating indignation, is one of the fundamentally human responses to tragedy. In the sources and narrative texts written after the Jōkyū Disturbance we see, in vivid color, the range of human reactions to moments of crisis and loss. These are the shock waves that Go-Toba’s defeat sent out through the cultural landscape of thirteenth-century Japan.

⁴ Ibid, p. 92.

I. Making Sense of Tragedy

How to make sense of tragedy has been one of the most prevailing preoccupations of cultural production throughout human history. When unfortunate or disastrous events occur, human beings have always struggled to comprehend how the universe they perceive as being good, orderly, or reasonable could allow something so terrible to happen. Theologians call this problem theodicy—meaning, in Judeo-Christian terms, the question of how evil can exist in a world believed to be created and ordered by a benevolent deity. From the Psalmists and Augustine to modern philosophers and novelists, this problem has preoccupied some of the greatest thinkers in the west.

Certainly in pre-modern Japan the cultural and religious landscape was much different, though the essential problem of explaining evil or unfortunate events had no less force. Japanese intellectuals confronted with the problem of tragedy turned to ideas within their own context: Buddhist ideas of karma and dependent origination; a newer theory of *mappō* (末法)—the “age of decline” of the Buddhist law; Confucian ideas of Heaven and human governance; precedents from tales of the history of East Asia, and a complex nexus of mythology stitched together around Bodhisattvas, native gods (*kami* 神), superstition, and geomancy (*onmyōdō* 陰陽道).

Yet though this collection of ideas is unique, the responses to tragedy that we see in the sources resonate with the trauma of defeat in any age or culture. Japanese writers, as we have seen in the comparison of the two courtiers above, also dealt with upsetting events in highly personal and idiosyncratic ways. When tragedy strikes us in the 21st century, we may, depending on our religious or personal beliefs, explain events in terms of fate, human error, divine retribution, a symptom of social decay, or the meaningless pain of existence. All of these

responses, for example, have been brought to bear on the recent shooting tragedies in North America. Yet this “modern” range of responses is not very different from what we see in the thirteenth century.

We have already seen, for example, the *Kaidōki* author’s tendency to feel powerlessness in the face of meaningless and unpreventable sadness—a reaction that may strike a chord with the themes of postmodern literature. To take another instance, see the following quotation by Jien in his *Gukanshō*, one of the few sections he added to his work after 1221:

Because the empire was involved in a civil war during this year [of 1221], the Emperor and Regent were suddenly replaced, and the people were thrown into confusion... Under conditions of the final reigns, such irregularities are not unusual. The Final Age is truly miserable.—*Gukanshō*.⁵

Jien’s comments about the Final Age pepper his work more broadly, but here they seem to have more sadness. Also, though this concept is clearly religious, dealing with the declining ages of Buddhist Law, there seems to be an implication of the decline of society here as well. Throughout *Gukanshō* Jien complains that people’s standards of efficiency, decorum, and education are not what they used to be.⁶ For Jien, pointing to the degeneration of human ability and morality, in both religious and secular terms, is a way to rationalize the shock of Jōkyū. The inescapability of the Age of Decline gives Jien carte blanche to ascribe meaning to a series of injustices that could potentially prove meaningless, though it is clear that such a rationalization has not dulled the sadness or sense of loss in the text.

The sources written after the Jōkyū Disturbance are wrestling with another uncomfortable reality—that a retired emperor was at the center of the tragedy. Here was not some merely unfortunate disaster or an unplanned natural calamity. It was a war instigated by the person most

⁵ Brown and Ishida, pp. 346-47.

⁶ For example, see Brown and Ishida pp. 231-238.

responsible for the welfare of the Japanese state: the emperor himself. Jōkyū is problematic in historiographical terms today for this very reason—I do not refer to Jōkyū as a rebellion precisely because the emperor himself was the main belligerent.⁷ But this problem was even more pressing for people in Kamakura Japan, who were left to assess Go-Toba's role in causing the Jōkyū Disturbance after his exile. Should Go-Toba bear the blame for what happened? Was it out of his control? As the shock waves of tragedy moved through thirteenth-century, along with them was the problem of how to blame, exonerate, or rationalize away Go-Toba's culpability in causing the defeat and suffering we saw above. Behind these varied responses to the war is the metaphysical question of the emperor's divinity. If the Japanese emperor was believed to be a descendant of Amaterasu, the sun goddess, then how could he be so fallible as to be defeated by warriors with no claim to imperial authority?

Blaming the Sovereign

The role of the emperor in Japanese history has been fraught with deep political and religious implications ever since Tenmu and Jitō first decided to call themselves *tennō* (literally “heavenly sovereign”) in the late seventh century. As I alluded to in the introduction, there was a strong tension between the ideal of a powerful Chinese-style emperor and the real emperors, who formed a motley assortment of very different kinds of leaders throughout pre-modern Japanese history. After what happened in 1221, this contradiction could no longer be ignored. An emperor and all of his sons were exiled, not by another claimant with equal authority, but by a warrior government that had fashioned itself as a “protector of the throne.” For a brief moment in the sixth month of 1221, the contradictions and disjunctures of post-Yoritomo Japan were laid bare

⁷ Ōtsu Yūichi hits this issue on the head, saying that Go-Toba's war does not fit into the model of rebellion; as he puts it, “the sovereign himself was the rebel” (*Ō jishin ga hangyakusha to nari*). *Gunki to ōken no ideorogi*, p. 227.

for all to see. And even though great pains were taken to restore the organs of courtly government to their previous incarnations, people in Japan were not fooled. Something had changed, and it was scary and unsettling.

Confronted with the incomprehensibility of a defeated emperor, Japanese writers reflected a wide range of responses toward Go-Toba's culpability in provoking war with the Bakufu. Some, as in the texts we have already seen, focused on the unfortunate ways of the world that allowed such tragedy to happen. Though, as I noted, these ideas were often supported by religious frameworks, others grasped even more overtly at otherworldly causes.

Very, very seldom in our country have subjects of no status crushed an emperor, as happened in this case... We must look beyond this world for an explanation of what happened—a truth incomprehensible to those too ignorant to understand karmic law.
—*Masukagami*.⁸

For the author of *Masukagami*, what happened was too terrible to be explained by human actions in this world. It was karma, the fruit of actions from previous ages, that had determined Go-Toba's fate. Though *Masukagami* was written considerably later than the thirteenth century texts, we see how the Jōkyū tragedy lingered powerfully in historical memory.

One of the most significant cultural outcomes of the Jōkyū tragedy was that it allowed a new discursive space for trenchant appraisal of the imperial station and the role of emperors in political calamities. To a degree that was unusual in Japanese history, most writers in the direct aftermath of the war were relatively unafraid to assign blame directly to Go-Toba himself. Though they often understood this blame in different political and religious terms, the anger and the strong sense of Go-Toba's culpability is clear.

⁸ Perkins, *The Clear Mirror*, p. 54.

In *Rokudai Shōjiki*, the author ends his work with an extended mock dialogue, like a philosophical treatise on misgovernment. In it the author imagines an interlocutor, a “person of our times,” who misunderstands the cause of the Jōkyū Disturbance and is content to blame only the disloyal ministers under Go-Toba. In response, the author takes on the persona of a “person of discernment” and refutes such excuses:

The length of an imperial reign depends without fail on whether the governance was good or bad... Whenever evil rulers are in charge of the state, they prize flatterers and demote the wise. Consequently, governance is no longer in line with precedent, and the winds blow down the branches and the falling rain washes away the earth.⁹

To the *Rokudai* author, the blame lies with the ruler himself, for Go-Toba’s actions had steered the court away from precedent and towards catastrophe. Like removing parts of an intricately built house of cards, Go-Toba’s actions unraveled the proper order of society, effecting everyone from the court down to the common people. The phrases about the natural world do fit into Confucian cosmology, where natural disasters are signs of bad government, but they could equally be read as symbolic tropes about the effect of Jōkyū on society in general.

The *Rufubon JKK* text takes condemnation of Go-Toba to a more personal level:

When one man (一人) bears a grudge will he even have innocent people killed? And when one man (一人) is pleased will he even reward those without loyalty? When things are like this Heaven does not support it. Go-Toba delivered his edict to the four seas, and sent out messengers to the various provinces, but there were none who obeyed him.¹⁰

The text particularly zeroes in on Go-Toba as an individual by emphasizing he is only one person. The phrase “one man” is repeated twice, a pattern that is striking most obviously for its repetition—sentences in classical Japanese, more so even than in the modern language, are

⁹ Appendix, p. 250-251.

¹⁰ *Rufubon*, section 108.

not obligated to repeat subjects, thus making repetition all the more significant rhetorically. These phrases also, however, emphasize the emperor's humanity. The usual noun used for Go-Toba in the texts is *in* 院 (retired emperor) or *kimi* 君 (lord/sovereign). But the *Rufubon* text here marks Go-Toba's ordinary humanity twice, reducing his decision-making to the mere whims of a normal man (人). The assessment of Go-Toba's failure is also interesting. The Mandate of Heaven is in the offing, and yet the proof of Heaven's displeasure—that no one followed Go-Toba's edict—is a no-nonsense reproach that rings true even without recourse to supernatural explanation. Because Go-Toba acted selfishly and caused resentment, no one joined him his war effort.

The *Jikōjibon* JKK text, which we will examine again shortly, focuses on Go-Toba's personality flaws, bad habits, and ignoble interests:

Go-Toba was inclined by nature toward worldly pursuits. He occupied himself not only with such exercises as *fukubutsu*, *etsunai*, swimming, gymnastics, sumo wrestling, and *kasagake* archery, but he also made plans for war, morning and evening busying himself in the martial arts, day and night preparing military weapons. When he was angry he personally inflicted cruel punishments upon those who opposed his humor in the slightest respect. If the residence or mountain villa of a court noble struck his fancy, he would appropriate it for his own use as an imperial palace. He had six palaces in the capital and many more in the country.
—*Jikōjibon* JKK.¹¹

Beginning from the first sentence the shamefulness of the retired emperor's proclivities is apparent: his “worldly pursuits,” his natural inclinations, his being swayed by “fancy” or pride. Go-Toba is being evaluated for his all-too-human behavior, centering—at least in this text—on a capricious attitude toward others and an immodest dilettantism in his personal interests. His love of military pursuits is an intentionally disturbing foreshadowing of his later attack on the Bakufu, adding other layers of meaning to the condemnation.

¹¹ McCullough, p. 180.

I want to argue that these texts show medieval Japanese thinkers evaluating Go-Toba in terms of both his official position, which was the upholder of the divine legacy of Japanese kingship, and as an individual with personal actions and accountability. The authors focus uncompromisingly on personal attributes, policies, and actions of Go-Toba as a fallible human being. Even though these writers are clearly interacting with certain cosmological ideas like the Mandate of Heaven, they are evaluating—and in most cases excoriating—Go-Toba’s governance in highly pragmatic and human terms. As with the complex motivations that moved members of Go-Toba’s retinue we saw in chapter three, in these responses to his failure we get the same sense that loyalty to the throne held very little currency for people in medieval Japan.

Anti-imperial Populism in the *Jikōjbon Jōkyūki*

The surprising ability of pre-modern observers to hold Go-Toba personally responsible for the Jōkyū Disturbance take their most intriguing form in the *Jikōjbon Jōkyūki*, the earliest of the Jōkyūki war tales. The tale for the most part is a straightforward retelling of the battles between the Bakufu and Go-Toba, centering on Iga Mitsusue’s downfall. However, a number of scenes reverberate with barbed criticisms of Go-Toba, the imperial taxation system, and the notion of nobility itself that are striking for their rarity in pre-modern discourse. The image of popular animosity toward the ruling elite that is displayed in *Jikōjbon* is a fascinating look at ground zero of the shock waves of the Jōkyū Disturbance.

The first incidence of radical anti-imperial commentary in the text comes with the Bakufu’s decision to attack. As I mentioned in chapter one, the *Jikōjbon JKK*’s council of war is far different from that of the other warrior texts. Instead of debating when to attack or whether to plan for offensive or defensive war, the warriors are immediately agreed that prompt action is

needed. What they debate is how to phrase their official response to Go-Toba's edict. The men cannot decide what to say, until a warrior named Kanesada speaks up and says that he knows the perfect response:

When the other men asked him what he proposed to say, Kanesada answered, "How would it be, gentlemen, if we were to say something like this: 'Lord of the Ten Good Acts! Has this business to do perhaps with the numerous tribute goods that we have the honor of presenting to you two and three times a year? Is it because of some dissatisfaction with them that you have issued this imperial proclamation? Moved to pity by the tears that Lady Nii [Masako] would shed in the mountain fastnesses of her holy retreat, we have summoned our warriors, and in response a great force will advance upon the capital by the Tōsendō, Tōkaidō, and Hokurikudō routes. You must match your warriors from the Western Provinces against this force and observe the progress of the battle between the slats of your blinds.'"¹²

The selection is so replete with pithy comments that it would take just as much space as the quotation itself to unravel them all. The tone is assertive and pejorative throughout Kanesada's mock reply, much like in Yoshitoki's boast we saw from the *Rufubon* text in chapter three. Kanesada starts and ends with presumptuous personal references to Go-Toba and also echoes *Rufubon* phraseology by calling on him to match his force against theirs. But some of the details in this speech traverse much more unsettling territory, from the point of view of imperial authority. The reference to taxation is biting, as a sarcastic Kanesada facetiously pretends that Go-Toba would start a war over the quality of the Bakufu's tribute goods.

But a real element of economic inequality between the elite and the ordinary soldier is also bubbling up here. True to the impulse toward elaboration in storytellers, the version of Kanesada's speech that is actually read to Go-Toba later in *Jikōjbon* includes more details on this tribute: 'Has this business to do perhaps with the numerous thirty-yard rolls of dyed cloth, and the silver, and the gold, and the "Ezo hidden feathers," and the superior tribute horses that we

¹² McCullough, "Shokyuki," pp. 207-208.

have the honor of sending to you two and three times a year?’¹³ The sense of frustration at the economic exploitation of the warriors at the hands of, presumably, Go-Toba himself is fanciful in historical terms but still very significant.

It is also important to mention the *Jikōjbon*’s uniqueness in using these characters in the first place. Kanesada himself is a lower-ranking warrior, making the *Jikōjbon* the only *JKK* text to imagine those below the top echelons of the Bakufu being privy to the council of war.¹⁴ Unlike the *AK*, *Rufubon*, and *Maedabon*, which make the council a secretive and Hōjō-led meeting, the *Jikōjbon* portrays the council more as a free-for-all, where any retainer could chime in with suggestions. The point of view of these ordinary commoners is compounded in the final comment that Go-Toba should observe the battle “between the slats of [his] blinds.” The emperor especially was bound by invisibility taboos, which would prevent even high-ranking courtiers from seeing him directly. So the reference to Go-Toba’s blinds is subversive, in addition to representing elite court furnishings more generally.

This populism and iconoclastic treatment of the emperor run throughout the *Jikōjbon*. Early on the text maneuvers Yoshitoki and Go-Toba into an inevitable showdown, foregrounding their conflict and their differences in character. In different sections both of them claim they will trust in fate; yet Yoshitoki’s victory proves narratively that his karma was superior to his lord’s in an unsettling irony.¹⁵ Even a seemingly formulaic Buddhist term for the sovereign—“Lord of the Ten Good Acts”—becomes a double-edged weapon in the *Jikōjbon*. The way the tale stacks Yoshitoki’s karma against Go-Toba’s “Ten Good Acts” turns the appellation into subversive

¹³ McCullough, “Shokyuki,” p. 420. See McCullough’s note on that page regarding the Bakufu’s “tribute” to the court.

¹⁴ Throughout *Jikōjbon JKK* commoners or mid-ranking people are given prominence. See, for example, the role of Jibu Jirō in the Mitsusue story.

¹⁵ Ōtsu Yūichi, *Gunki to ōken no ideorogi*, p. 230. See McCullough, p. 190, where Go-Toba’s supporters set up this irony by musing, “How could the karma fruits of Yoshitoki match those of the Lord of the Ten Good Acts?”

commentary, questioning whether Go-Toba has in fact lived up to this title.¹⁶

The most fascinating moment of subversion comes in the *Jikōjbon*'s treatment of the battle of Ōi crossing we investigated in chapter three. As the Bakufu generals Takeda and Ogasawara are marching their forces to the Owari River, one of the Kyoto soldiers taunts the Bakufu forces:

Left Gate Guard Satsuma stood forth and answered, "However you men over there may talk, you're nothing but retainers of Yoshitoki. Since we've received an imperial order to subdue your lord, do you think you can cross unopposed? If you can cross, do so!"

Since Go-Toba himself has authorized them to attack Yoshitoki, Satsuma and his men are using this authority to bolster their own prediction of success. The presumptiveness of Satsuma's challenge seems to suggest that he believes the emperor's order itself ensures their rectitude and success in battle. It is not surprising that the Bakufu warriors are unconvinced by this statement, but the severity of their rebuttal warrants quotation in full:

Angered by these words, Shingorō shouted back, "You, sir, who speak there in the forefront! Who isn't descended from ancient princes? Lords Takeda and Ogasawara are both descendants of Emperor Seiwa, and Yoshitoki is of Emperor Kammu's stock. Who isn't descended from ancient princes? I'll show you about making a crossing."¹⁷

Not only does the authorization of the emperor count for naught, the very question of nobility or noble birth is thrown into doubt. "Who isn't descended from ancient princes?" the Bakufu warrior Shingorō shouts not once, but twice. His own generals Takeda and Ogasawara are from the Seiwa Genji (i.e., Minamoto), and Yoshitoki himself was from the Kammu Heishi (Taira), lineages originally established to siphon excess imperial princes into non-royal status. This

¹⁶ Ōtsu Yūichi, p. 232.

¹⁷ McCullough, p. 429.

awareness of the imperial origin of the Minamoto and Taira clans is not an irrelevant historical detail for Shingorō. This character is using the fact that all great warriors share imperial blood to relativize Go-Toba's claim to supremacy. To one scholar, this is "a dangerous moment" for the imperial realm where a subject could so openly disregard the unique claim to authority in the Japanese imperial lineage.¹⁸ If, as this scholar claims, the *Jikōjbon* is breaking a time-honored taboo in historical discourse by rejecting Go-Toba's authority wholesale, it is strong evidence that the Jōkyū Disturbance was indeed a moment of crisis where such drastic reactions were newly possible.

Conclusions

Historians of the modern period have done fruitful work on the contradictions of the Japanese emperor after the Meiji Restoration, when government officials and citizens alike had to tread a fine line between recognizing the emperor's humanity and extolling his divinity. For example, Takashi Fujitani, throughout his book *Splendid Monarchy*, is intrigued by the duality of the Meiji emperor as both human and divine, and the way these dualities were understood and rationalized in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁹ Fujitani suggests the ability for Meiji-era Japanese to conceive of the emperor in these oppositional terms was a unique product of modern ideology. But the above responses reveal that, far from being restricted to modern examples of the *kokutai*, or emperor-system, such duality existed much earlier. People of the thirteenth century were clearly thinking of Go-Toba both as a semi-divine monarch and as an actual fallible human being—and their tendency after the Jōkyū Disturbance was to ignore the emperor's divinity far more than what we see in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

¹⁸ This citation and next by Ōtsu Yūichi, pp. 228-229.

¹⁹ Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*, especially pp. 192-194

Moments of crisis involving imperial succession, like the Jinshin War and the Hōgen Disturbance, may have released similar frustrated energies in earlier times. But the level of vehemence directed specifically at the sovereign here is astounding and unprecedented. Compared to the writing on the emperor in earlier times—and later times!— it seems that the shock and outrage of 1221 allowed thinkers in thirteenth-century Japan license to overtly criticize the emperor more than they had ever had before, and on very human terms.

II. The “Debate Texts”

We can see one intriguing venue for the post-Jōkyū process of rationalizing tragedy in the later narrative sources. It is a supposed debate recorded between Hōjō Yoshitoki and his son Yasutoki as the latter is about to depart for the battlefield in 1221. The tale is surely apocryphal; beyond the fact that no anecdote in a narrative text can be automatically believed, the debate only appears in texts starting in the early fourteenth century. At any rate, the debate can be found in three texts from the late medieval era: *Masukagami* (“the Clear Mirror”), introduced earlier; *Baishōron* (梅松論 “Discourse on Plum and Pines”); and a hagiography, *Myōe shōnin denki* (明恵上人伝記 “Biography of St. Myōe”). Each version is very different, but what they have in common we can summarize briefly. Just as Yasutoki has departed for battle, or is about to, he asks his father Yoshitoki whether it is right for the Bakufu to fight against Go-Toba. Yoshitoki essentially tells him not to worry, giving him reasons to proceed in battle and, in some cases, any exceptions for when it would not be appropriate to continue the war. Satisfied with his father’s answer, Yasutoki proceeds to lead his troops toward Kyoto.

Let us now investigate the differences in these three “debate texts.”

***Masukagami* (1333-1370s) version**

As mentioned in chapter one, *Masukagami* is a courtier-based narrative telling the events of the Kamakura period. The *Masukagami* account of the debate is most likely the earliest version, and it is assuredly the most succinct. Yasutoki returns a day after the army's departure and asks his father what to do if, in battle, he encounters Go-Toba himself leading the Kyoto forces. Yoshitoki considers this, and then tells him never to draw his bow against the emperor directly:

“If you meet any such expedition, take off your helmet cut your bowstring, and place yourself respectfully in His Majesty's hands. But if the retired emperor stays in the capital... then fight at the risk of your life, until only one man in a thousand is left.”²⁰

With this condition made explicit, Yasutoki dashes back to lead the Bakufu forces. The debate is over quickly, and Yasutoki seems more curious than worried. With his curiosity satisfied he is able to lead the Bakufu to victory.

***Baishōron* (1349) version**

Baishōron is a war tale written in the early Muromachi period lauding the virtues and accomplishments of the founder of the second Bakufu, Ashikaga Takauji. It also carries a short description of the Jōkyū Disturbance, and within this section, a longer version of the Yoshitoki-Yasutoki debate. In this version, Yasutoki does not simply ask what to do if he meets Go-Toba in battle. Instead he says, “It has never been said that the entire land does not belong to the sovereign.” Yasutoki explains that whenever people have tried to go against imperial orders, they have failed. Yasutoki proposes that their family should cease from battle and surrender, however unfortunate this might be.

²⁰ Perkins, *The Clear Mirror*, pp. 51-52.

After this more detailed objection to their plans, his father Yoshitoki responds:

What you have said is very excellent, but it is only [true] at times when the sovereign's rule is just... The only places where disaster has not yet befallen are probably places under the Kanto's jurisdiction. Rule and disorder are like fire and water. When matters have come to this, in order to pacify the realm, we must trust in Heaven's way and give battle.²¹

Yoshitoki then explains that they should punish Go-Toba's ministers and replace him on the throne. His discussion of Go-Toba's misrule and the punishments he deserves are quite long. Finally, Yoshitoki ends with a familiar phrase: "If the emperor meets you [in battle], you should take off your helmet, lay down your bow and bow your head [in surrender]. This view is also not without basis." The central question of the debate in *Masukagami* is presented here almost as an afterthought. Regardless, Yasutoki sets out immediately and leads the Bakufu to victory.

The *Myōe Shōnin Denki* version (1400s?)

The longest version of the debate can be found in a variant of the biography of Myōe (1173-1232), a priest from the Kegon sect. In a section of his biography he is shown engaging in a discussion with Hōjō Yasutoki, supposedly some years after the Jōkyū Disturbance. Already the differences in this text are apparent; since this is a biography, the debate is part of an anecdote of reminiscence instead of a scene of action set in 1221.

Here Myōe is somewhat dramatically confronting Yasutoki with a critique of the Bakufu's actions. Myōe asks how Yasutoki was could justify disobeying imperial commands. In a long speech, Myōe criticizes the crimes of the Bakufu in stringent terms:

You have brandished military power everywhere for your own purposes, destroying royal palaces; you have gone so far as to capture the ex-emperor and send him to a distant exile.²²

²¹ This version of the debate in *Baishōron, gen'ishū, Shinsen nihon koten bunko*, pp. 40-41.

²² This debate text and quotations from Lieteau, "The Yasutoki-Myōe Discussion," pp. 204-208.

At one point Myōe even tells Yasutoki that he has violated reason and principle, and that Heaven will punish him in the next world.

Yasutoki is distraught by these accusations. He wipes away tears and admits that he has long wanted to explain his side of the story. Yasutoki gives a long history of Yoritomo and the Bakufu's good deeds. He says he intended to follow Go-Toba the way his forbears followed Go-Shirakawa, but that imperial administration had degenerated under Go-Toba's reign, throwing the land into poverty and chaos. Yasutoki then recounts a debate he had with his father after they found out about Go-Toba's attack. Interestingly, the text becomes a debate within debate, as Yasutoki presents for Myōe both sides of the debate he had with his father. Yasutoki explains the position he took, arguing for obeying Go-Toba's orders and surrendering to him:

Everything on earth belongs to the emperor; fighting against him would be a violation of this principle... and, after all, if we are beheaded, why should we regret it?

Yasutoki then tells Yoshitoki's response. Yoshitoki repeats some of the same arguments he makes in the *Baishōron* version: That this maxim is only true when the state is governed well, and that the realm has been chaotic under Go-Toba's rule. He continues:

But those provinces over which the bakufu has direct control have escaped this misfortune, and the people have been living in peace. Should the Kanto be brought under the rule of the imperial court, the entire country would meet with calamities and suffering and there would not be any peace.

Yoshitoki ends his argument with his plan if the Bakufu is victorious:

If the Kanto has fortune on its side, we should simply have the emperor abdicate the throne in favor of a new prince. Amaterasu and Hachiman would not punish us. We will not attribute errors to the emperor, but will punish only the councillors who have wrongly advised His Majesty to go to war.

Done with reporting his father's side, Yasutoki ends his discussion with Myōe by explaining that he had no choice but to follow his father's orders and attack Kyoto. He says effusively that he

has spent the rest of his life praying that Heaven would approve of his actions—wondering at the end if his prayers have been answered, since he has lived without misfortune until the present.

Even in this extremely abbreviated summary, one can easily see that the Myōe version of the debate is many times longer than the other two versions. The argumentation is more developed and much more sophisticated, as each of the three participants outline their positions in soliloquies before letting their interlocutors respond.

The historian John Brownlee, one of the first scholars to attempt a coherent overview of pre-modern Japanese historical and political writings in English, makes these three debate texts the focus of a chapter in his book, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)*. The chapter “Historiography of the Jōkyū War” analyzes the three debate texts and evaluates their political ideas. In his discussion of the three texts above, his clear preference is for the *Myōe* version: he calls it a “rigorous examination of the problem” of imperial defeat and a “striking piece of political discussion.”²³

After discussion of *Myōe Shōnin Denki*, his treatment of *Masukagami* is less flattering. He does call it an intelligent work and the highest form of the Historical Tale (*rekishi monogatari*). Yet he complains that it is “limited in its capacity to provide explanation of history.” On a few occasions he refers to *Masukagami* “stopping” a discussion before it could fully develop into a proper examination of political thought.²⁴ Similarly, with *Baishōron*, he points out what he sees as a fatal flaw. The entire point of *Baishōron*, he says, is to prove that sovereignty and political control throughout history is only tied to virtuous government—in other

²³ Brownlee, p. 79.

²⁴ Brownlee, pp. 83: “*Masukagami* was following the same trend of argument as *Myōe Shōnin Denki*, but it stopped far short of the concept of absolute sovereignty of that work.” And on the next page: “*Masukagami* stops the discussion there, regarding the reference to other-worldly causes as the end of the discussion rather than the beginning.”

words, Heaven lends legitimacy to rulers based on his righteousness of rule, and not from some inherent absolute sovereignty. So when confronted with Yoshitoki's final dictum to lay down arms if the army encounters Go-Toba, Brownlee sees a glaring contradiction: this is an argument for absolute sovereignty, not virtuous government.²⁵

Overall, his criticism of both the *Masukagami* and *Baishōron* selections is that through underdeveloped arguments they have “softened the hard arguments about sovereignty” in the *Myōe* version—indeed, he says they retreated from discussing the issue of sovereignty in any direct way. For this scholar, when it came to fully explaining Go-Toba's defeat, “*Masukagami* took refuge in religious doctrine, and *Baishōron* fell into contradiction.”²⁶ Neither text provides an adequate explanation of history. Brownlee's analysis of the three debate texts is intriguing and provides a compelling overview of major differences in argumentation style and political theory. But for our purposes his conclusions are somewhat lacking.

There are two major problems with Brownlee's analysis of these debate texts. The first is a rather murky chronology—he never states when a text is believed to have been written, and he jumps back and forth between earlier and later texts while seeming to treat them as part of a linear development of Japanese thought. He quotes the *Myōe* text first, then—as we have seen—finds the other two lacking, as if they were undoing the gains to political philosophy that *Myōe*'s biography had already won. But there is a great range of texts under the umbrella of *Myōe*'s biography, and the earliest variants that can be reliably dated to the thirteenth and early fourteenth century *do not* contain the debate with Yasutoki.²⁷ In other words, it is likely that the

²⁵ Ibid, p. 87.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 88.

²⁷ Lieteau does not explicitly explain this fact, but analysis of his biographical notes and preliminary research on the different variants in the *Myōe Shōnin Yōshū* (1931-33) and *Myōe Shōnin Shiryō* (1971) suggests that the earlier *Gyōjō* version does not carry the debate, nor the most early-dated *Denki* version, the Kōfukuji-bon from the late fourteenth century. This dating problem is an area for further inquiry.

Myōe version of the debate is later than that of *Baishōron* and *Masukagami*, yet Brownlee stacks them up in the opposite order.²⁸

Brownlee's second problem is another outgrowth of his concern with tracing the development of political thought in Japan. His analysis, though contributing much to our discourse on pre-modern Japanese politics, has a tendency to prioritize and rank his sources in terms of how coherent their political arguments are. His criterion for evaluating the debate texts, as we have seen, is whether they present sophisticated arguments with a critical understanding of politics and history. This objective causes him to pluck textual selections out of context as well as time. Thus there is great reason to re-evaluate these three debate texts with an eye to narrative style and historical chronology, as additional evidence of the shock waves of Go-Toba's defeat as they were being reinterpreted in the fourteenth century and later.

Reinterpreting the “Debate” Texts

Instead of pulling out these debates and analyzing them solely at face value, we must pay attention to style, characterization and context. These works were not primarily written to enunciate political ideas or make persuasive debates—they were narrative texts attempting to tell a story. There is a process of analysis of history in these texts that is not limited to the selections that seem most like our concept of political discourse. These texts, as scholars like Brownlee note but perhaps do not fully appreciate, were rationalizing history primarily through *narrative*,

²⁸ In the book more broadly, Brownlee is similarly prone to problematic treatment of time. Some titles, like “Kojiki: Japan's First Book” and “The Rise of Military Government” seem to suggest a chronological frame, while others like “Historical Tales” or “War Tales” seem bounded by topic or genre. This muddiness is apparent within many chapters as well. In the chapter on Jōkyū that focuses on the debate texts, Brownlee states that longstanding imperial ideology was built on the idea that rulers could not lose—hence why the Jōkyū Disturbance was so shocking. Yet his explanation of this pre-existing ideology draws solely from Nichiren, who was born a year *after* the Disturbance. See pp. 78-79.

and thus we must pay attention to their narrative attributes.²⁹ Let us re-examine the three debate texts with their storytelling elements in mind.

Once can surely criticize the *Masukagami* account, along with *Baishōron*, for hinging on technicalities: certainly the emperor would never personally lead troops, so theories about his invincibility could not be tested.³⁰ Thus, from a philosophical point of view, turning to the technicality of the emperor himself leading troops is an avoidance of the issue of imperial authority. There is truth to this point. Rather than see these arguments as failures of critical thinking, however, we might instead see them as triumphs of narrative storytelling. This counterfactual principle of the emperor's sovereignty is a way to rationalize the potentially dangerous motives of the Bakufu. Showing the Hōjō being willing to lay down their arms in front of Go-Toba is a tactic that endows these characters with sympathy. I also think we should caution against taking such statements too literally. *Baishōron* in particular spends most of its account focusing on the righteousness of the Bakufu and the punishments that they will exact on Go-Toba's faction. The addition of the phrase about surrender seems like mere lip-service in the context of a mostly unabashedly pro-warrior account.

Which brings us to another point of comparison between *Masukagami* and *Baishōron*: they are not simply two texts that repeat the same debate, but rather two narratives with very different sympathies and points of view. *Baishōron*, a warrior-centered text, is highly critical of Go-Toba's governance. The *Masukagami*, a courtier-based text, is very sympathetic and nostalgic towards Go-Toba. But we can also look elsewhere in the text for evidence of how *Masukagami* rationalized the emperor's defeat. In a later episode, Go-Toba makes a pilgrimage to Ōmiya shrine in Hiyoshi to pray for success in battle. Unfortunately, the god sends him a message:

²⁹ Brownlee, p. 81.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 89.

because Go-Toba had let his entourage mistreat the god's portable shrine, he cannot honor Go-Toba's request for aid. Go-Toba is disconsolate:

Over and over, he begged forgiveness. The decision to repel the sacred palanquin had not necessarily been his, but no such thought could lessen his misery. As the saying goes, "the Sovereign bears all the blame." (責め一人に)³¹

What is fascinating in this scene is that Go-Toba expresses remorse and sadness, but not about the war with the Bakufu. His crime is completely unrelated, and it seems, not entirely his fault. Here *Masukagami* is deflecting blame from Go-Toba by focusing on an unrelated sin, neatly explaining his military failure by the whims of the god of Ōmiya shrine. In the first section of this chapter, we saw a quote from *Masukagami* where the author finds refuge in the inexplicable power of karma. Here again he is using religious ideas of karma to rationalize Go-Toba's fate and essentially free him of culpability for instigating the Jōkyū Disturbance. I want to emphasize that only a sustained look at the rest of the *Masukagami* narrative can allow us to fully appreciate the author's full views on imperial authority and Go-Toba's blame.

Finally, let us return to the biography of Myōe. Many scholars point out this is the most sophisticated version of the debate, and they are correct; only, as I argued, it is because the *Myōe* text is likely the latest of the three. But what does this development and sophistication mean? First of all, Yasutoki's character has been completely fleshed out compared to the earlier texts. He cries upon hearing Myōe's denouncement, wipes his tears, and confesses that he has long wished to explain his side of the story. This is not a meaningless development. It is as if Yasutoki is apologizing for his actions, rather than explaining their correctness. Similarly, Yasutoki's attitude to his father is more ambiguous than in the other texts. He claims "I had no alternative,

³¹ Perkins, p. 52 (original, *NKBT* 87 p. 274). In this I disagree with the claim of some scholars that the phrase represents the inescapability of Confucian moral condemnation in pre-modern texts. See Ito Kei, *Masukagami kōsetsu*, p. 248.

for in addition to the fact that there was truth in what he said, I was obliged to obey the orders of my father.” Where he had been in immediate agreement with Yoshitoki in the other texts, here he is a reluctant, almost petulant child. As if this were not sufficient effusiveness, Yasutoki ends by saying that he has placed his fate “in the hands of Heaven” and striven not to be negligent with any of his duties—as though he is paying a penance for his deeds.

The entire *Myōe* discussion, unlike *Baishōron* or *Masukagami*, is an extended confession atoning for Yasutoki’s sins, and it is meant to do two things. The first is to highlight the prescience and moral authority of Myōe, about whom the entire text is written. The second, I believe, is to undermine and flatten some of the dangerous and uncomfortable implications of the Bakufu’s attack on the sovereign in the Jōkyū Disturbance. If we see the Myōe text as a later development, we can imagine how disturbing the contradictions and attitudes of the thirteenth century would be to later writers. The Myōe text undoes some of the more disturbing implications of the pro-Bakufu debate and shows both warrior and courtier united in their respect for the emperor. Even Yoshitoki in this text is more civil in his words about Go-Toba. It is only after a great deal of time, however, that such a sophisticated rationalization of the Jōkyū Disturbance could be fully enunciated.

Conclusions

What do the shock waves of Go-Toba’s defeat tell us about the importance of the Jōkyū Disturbance and its aftermath?

- 1) Go-Toba’s defeat was a shocking event that people rationalized in very different ways. The variety of responses is a window into the cultural complexity of the thirteenth century, but also bespeak the universal human need to make sense of tragedy.
- 2) Since the Jōkyū conflict was instigated by the retired emperor himself, Japanese

- writers were able to localize blame on Go-Toba, criticizing the emperor on very human terms more than ever before. The disregard for imperial authority in works like *Jikōjbon JKK* cast new doubts on the uniqueness of modern questions of divinity and humanity in the imperial system of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 3) Go-Toba's blame was also assessed through anecdotal moments of debate within certain narratives, but only attention to their narrative elements allows us to see the debates properly as attempts to rationalize the uncomfortable implications of the Bakufu's victory over time.

The various responses and debates about the sovereign in the wake of the Jōkyū tragedy show us very clearly the competing ideologies and identities in early medieval Japan. Though writers turned to their own unique religious, political, and personal beliefs, their writings document the trauma and surprise that Jōkyū sent through Japanese society. As we have seen, one of the fractures reverberating around the disturbance was an increased ability to criticize and blame the emperor himself. Some reveled in Go-Toba's blame, and others tried to rationalize it away; either way, the uncomfortable truth existed that a leader with a link to the divine had been foolishly and humiliatingly defeated. The shock waves of the Jōkyū Disturbance show us the complex and fractured nature of authority and power in pre-modern Japan.

Chapter 5 – Changing Perceptions of Warriors and Courtiers

How Could They Know the Way of Battle?

There is a vivid scene recounted in *Rokudai Shōjiki* where Go-Toba and his men consider fleeing to Mount Hiei as the Bakufu troops approach the capital. Realizing they may need to protect themselves, Go-Toba's courtiers take up arms for the first time:

There the ministers and courtiers (公卿・殿上人) donned their armor and raised their flags. These men had all the appearance of normal warriors (もののふのすがた), but how could they know the way of battle? They truly looked pitiful.¹

Clearly to the *Rokudai* author, merely putting on armor and handling weapons did not make one a warrior. To the author, warriors had a set of skills and experience in battle that set them apart from everyone else. Yet a close reading of the texts in the Kamakura period reveals people at the time believed warriors possessed something more intrinsic than skills or training. To the author of *Rokudai* and many others like him, being a warrior was a unique identity, implying information about character and values as well. Courtiers like Go-Toba's supporters could not have become warriors even if they had taken the time to gain the training and skills to fight—only true warriors possessed the temerity and character to withstand the harshness of battle. Yet what exactly this identity entailed, beyond bravery or a martial disposition, is not entirely clear. What was a “true warrior” to these writers? What kind of character and values did he have? And how did the definition of who was a warrior (and who was not) change over time?

A close analysis of the sources as we move through the thirteenth century and into the fourteenth reveals how some of the myths of warrior identity solidified over time. As the Jōkyū Disturbance receded into history, writers amplified the tales of Go-Toba's failure and the

¹ Appendix, p. 242.

Kamakura Bakufu's victory with ideals and concerns that were increasingly relevant to them. If our task in the last two chapters was to elucidate what the events of the early thirteenth century meant largely to people that lived through them, our task in this final chapter is to unravel the other strands of meaning and myth that began to be grafted onto the Jōkyū Disturbance as living memory turned into legend. At the heart of these changes is a long process of shifting perceptions, as observers in medieval Japan reached a gradual consensus on what it meant to be a warrior—as well as a courtier. The texts on the Jōkyū Disturbance provide a useful opportunity to inventory these changes in cultural identity, for we can often see very visibly the layers of new meanings that accumulated around these stories, often through added or subtracted details or anecdotes. Thus in some cases accounts of the same incident in different narratives can reveal real changes in how later writers understood the evolving courtier-warrior relationship.

The other reason Jōkyū literature provides a valuable window into changing identities is its unique position in the Japanese literary cannon—or more precisely, its position *outside* of it. Comparison with texts on the Genpei War is relevant and instructive. In the words of one scholar, the Genpei War became “memorialized almost as soon as it ended,” exploding as a topic of popular literature, theater, and other pre-modern media in Japan.² Yet despite this early advent of Genpei popular tales and performances, their timeless themes and popularity ensured a longer gestation period of development before a representative body of them were actually written down. It is precisely because of their performative popularity, then, that there was little need to commit Genpei texts like *Heike Monogatari* immediately to the page. Conversely, the Jōkyū Disturbance remained a less prolific and more conservative topic of cultural production, resulting in a contracted period of textual development. Thus, even though the Jōkyū Disturbance took

² Elizabeth Oyler, *Swords, Oaths and Prophetic Visions*, p. 1. See also Oyler's introduction and Barbara Ruch's *Medieval Jongleurs*, especially pp. 288-304, on this explosion of Genpei War literature.

place almost forty years after the Genpei war, we have a number of Jōkyū texts which antedate all but the earliest variant of Genpei stories.³ Thus the Jōkyū texts can give us better insights into courtier and warrior cultural representations in the early and mid-thirteenth century than Genpei tales like *Heike Monogatari*.

Moreover, precisely because there was less imagination and artistic energy being focused upon the Jōkyū Disturbance, the writers who did engage with the events of 1221 were motivated more by the task of explaining history than by sheer storytelling.⁴ Certainly storytelling tropes and literary imagination abound, especially in the more belletristic texts, as I have demonstrated in previous chapters. But because the texts have a more restricted objective—explaining Jōkyū instead of using it as a launching pad to explore archetypal human concerns—the inventiveness and fiction in these texts are more likely to reflect writers’ actual views of history.⁵ In other words, any details authors imagined, exaggerated, or invented were guided more by plausibility than entertainment value; though, of course, plausibility for medieval Japanese writers, not necessarily for twenty-first century readers. Because of this greater commitment to plausibility, we can more confidently elucidate medieval views of courtiers and warriors from the Jōkyū texts than from other medieval tales.

We will first investigate the changing perceptions of warriors in section I, and then

³ Kenneth Butler outlines the basic textual variants in “The Textual Evolution of the *Heike Monogatari*,” noting the dates of the earliest variants on pp. 23-29. His conclusion is that the earliest variant, *Shibu kassenjō*, was written around 1221, but this text is only the most basic outline of historical events. The *Yashiro* version (written in about the second half of the thirteenth century) is the first that has any narrative elaboration, which makes it later than four of the Jōkyū narratives in this study. See also his summary of the most important variants in “The *Heike Monogatari* and the Japanese Warrior Ethic,” pp. 96-97.

⁴ McCullough makes this point when comparing JKK to the more “imaginatively developed context” and “successful blending of history and literature” in *Heike Monogatari* and *Taiheiki*. He is right in this basic distinction, but I would add that many of the Jōkyū texts are still narrative fiction, and we cannot take their details automatically as historical truth.

⁵ Though Elizabeth Oyler rightly reminds us that even the more imaginative Genpei texts were seen as history, pp. 6 and 11.

proceed to analyze solidifying perceptions of courtiers in section II.

I. The Ambiguous Way of the Warrior

As I posited in chapter two, the overwhelming courtier understanding of the Bakufu in the early thirteenth century was that the Bakufu was a necessary aid to the state. But this support necessarily implied difference—Kamakura warriors could only support the state if they were being “true” warriors like Yoritomo rather than courtier imitators like Sanetomo. So what it meant to be a warrior was clearly marked in early thirteenth-century discourse, and warriors were considered a unique “other.” However, there was no comprehensive consensus on what exactly warrior identity entailed. Increasingly ideals of loyalty, bravery, and honor overwhelmed portrayals of warriors in the narrative texts, but these tropes were originally a matter of literary invention.⁶ Our task in this section is to evaluate portrayals of warrior in the texts with a critical eye. Our first attempt to understand perceptions of warriors in the Kamakura period lies with the terminology for warriors we see in medieval discourse.

Terminology: The Boundary between ‘Warriors’ and ‘Soldiers’

The term most associated with warriors in texts of the early medieval period is *bushi* (武士). The earliest uses of this term in Japan seem to denote one who has studied the military arts, and not necessarily someone whose identity and livelihood is defined by participation in warfare.⁷ It cannot be found in early texts like *Nihon Shoki*, *Kojiki*, or *Manyōshū*. Instead the

⁶ Butler, “The *Heike Monogatari* and the Japanese Warrior Ethic,” p. 103.

⁷ See the *Nikkoku* entry on *bushi*, citing an early usage in *Shoku Nihongi*. Andrew Goble reminds us that even in the later medieval period, warriors also lived lives with other careers in addition to being warriors, *Kenmu*, p. xv. Thus this chapter is concerned with how warriors were portrayed and perceived, and not necessarily who they were.

term for people whose careers are defined by use of arms in the earliest Japanese texts is most often *hyōshi* or *heishi* (兵士), which might be best translated “soldier.”⁸ Though a brief overview here does great injustice to the variety of similar pre-modern terms for people who took up arms—including *mononofu*, *tsuwamono*, and other combinations of some of the above characters—tracing the rise of the term *bushi* and its contrastive interplay with *heishi* does give instructive insights into ancient and medieval understandings of warriors.⁹ Let us look briefly at the breakdown between *bushi* and *heishi* in the Japanese war tales.

In the earliest war tale, *Shōmonki* (11th century), *bushi* is not used at all, only *heishi*. In *Mutsu Waki* (late 11th century), however, we see the first usage of *bushi* in a war narrative alongside *heishi*, though *bushi* occurs much less frequently.¹⁰ Though there are only three usages of *bushi* in this tale, we can see some important points: each instance of *bushi* 1) refers to warriors as a group, rather than individually; 2) references their locale away from the court (in one case specifically in the east); and 3) emphasizes qualities of character such as bravery, loyalty, and skill.¹¹ Here it is not a matter of two different groups of fighters called “soldiers” and “warriors”—instead, the same group of fighters is called *heishi* in stories of actual battle and punishment, but called *bushi* when the author wishes to draw attention to their otherness in more general and essentialist terms.

⁸ It seems to have meant “peasant conscripts” in the *Ritsuryō* codes, according to *Nikkoku*.

⁹ It must be noted that the difference between character compounds and ‘kun’ readings is also relevant: for example, the characters most often read *bushi* (武士) could also be read as *mononofu*, so many of these linguistic boundaries are permeable. But because it seems like the realm of meanings around the character 武 and the character 兵 stayed fairly constant, we can look at *bushi* and *heishi* as emblematic of larger linguistic trends delineating warriors from soldiers.

¹⁰ In *SNKBZ* 41, uses of *bushi* occur on pp. 138, 152, and 179. *Heishi* is used on pp. 146, 152, 159, 161, 163, and twice on 167 (counting only the *kanbun* usages, not the *yomikudashi*).

¹¹ In the first instance “eastern *bushi*” support Yoriyoshi because he is so skilled and brave; in the second, *bushi* consider it a travesty when a soldier named Kunitae defects to the enemy; in the third, the narrator comments that it is natural for *bushi* to be devoted to Yoshiie because of his skill. See citation above.

This valence of the “other” can be found in many court writings in the Heian period that often invoke warriors hypothetically or *in absentia* to illustrate how moving or upsetting an event is, in the basic pattern “even brave warriors” would feel sad at this, etc.¹² The association between *bushi* and the east also persists in texts from the Heian to the Kamakura periods, often with the added layer of meaning “barbarian” (夷).¹³ Chinese discourse, which conceived of a political order with civilization at the center and barbarians at the periphery, was imported to a landscape where the Japanese court in the Kinai plain was most practically confronted by insurrection and rebellion from “less civilized” people to the northeast. The East thus stood for uncultured, uncultivated, or uncivilized lands throughout Japanese history.¹⁴ It is no surprise, then, that the idea of an “eastern warrior” and a “barbarian warrior” became an easy transmutation, especially considering how warriors were already seen as uniquely different from those at the center.¹⁵

This connection between *bushi* and the east increasingly solidified as Yoritomo founded the first warrior government in Kamakura—to the east of Kyoto—and staffed it with retainers who were almost exclusively from the Kantō plain. For example, the phrase “eastern warriors” is used as a stock designation for Bakufu troops throughout the Jōkyū texts, and “the Kanto” often stands in as a synecdoche for the Bakufu itself.¹⁶ With all of these overlapping associations, it is

¹² See *Kokin Wakashū*, SNKBZ 11, p. 17: “A poem that would even calm the heart of a stalwart warrior;” *Sumiyoshi Monogatari*, SNKBZ 39, p. 119: “Even warriors who do not understand the sadness of things (*aware*)...”

¹³ See *Utsuhho Monogatari*, SNKBZ 14, p. 83 and SNKBZ 15, p. 254; *Torikaebaya Monogatari*, SNKBZ 39, p. 336.

¹⁴ Especially insightful here is David Bialock’s work on space and medieval literature, particularly *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories*, pp. 183-188 on the ambivalence of warriors as threatening barbarian others, and emerging figures of centrality on their own terms.

¹⁵ In the later *Baishōron*, for example, there is still an association between “barbarians” and the legendary exploits of Yamato Takeru, who was supposedly sent to subjugate them. See *Baishōron*, section 2.

¹⁶ For example, AK, 1221/5/19. The term “The Kanto” or the “Bando,” both meaning the east, is used for the Bakufu in all three JKK texts.

little wonder that warriors specifically connected with the Bakufu were much more likely to be called *bushi* than warriors from central or western provinces, or members of the imperial guards in Kyoto, who would be called some variation of *heishi* or simply their official bureaucratic title. For most writers, the marking *bushi* most often indicated that the person so named was an official Kamakura vassal.¹⁷ Both Jien and the *Rokudai* author use the term *bushi* most frequently for warriors under the Minamoto, and the phrase “eastern” or “barbarian” warrior is a common iteration.¹⁸

The “barbarian” element in early Kamakura warrior identity, however, should not be overstated. No doubt calling the Bakufu warriors “eastern barbarians” was an easy association, and there certainly was an understanding that warriors were not as cultured or educated as men of Kyoto. Kujō Kanezane once famously referred to Hōjō Tokimasa as a “country bumpkin” in his diary.¹⁹ But we should not assume that the idea of a barbarian warrior automatically entailed negative associations. The *Rokudai* author, who uses the term barbarian for Bakufu warriors, is extremely sympathetic and positive toward the Bakufu, so the barbarian imagery, for the most part, is a neutral, locative association.²⁰ Yet there is one way in which the nexus of eastern/barbarian/*bushi* held more water than simply being a matter of locale. Like in the earliest uses of *bushi* in the war tales, the identification of *bushi* with Bakufu vassals perpetuated an idea that the most authentic, true and unique warriors were not mere soldiers, but lifelong warriors who came from the East.

¹⁷ See Tsutomu Nishikori, “Meigetsuki ni awareru ‘bushi’ no gogi ni tsuite,” which claims that only Kamakura *gokenin* were called *bushi* in the Kamakura period.

¹⁸ Brown and Ishida, pp. 130 and 135; *Rokudai* tr, pp. 3, 11, 15-17.

¹⁹ *DKR*, p. 23, quoting *Gyokuyō*, 1186/3/24.

²⁰ See Appendix, pp. 234, 240, 244, and 246 for “barbaric” eastern warriors, though I have not always translated the terms for “barbarian” in the original. See chapter 2 for *Rokudai*’s positive image of Yoritomo and the Bakufu.

We will look at issues of warrior authenticity in the next section with a comparison of the Taira and Minamoto, but suffice it to say that observers in the Kamakura period saw warriors from the east and specifically connected to the Bakufu as the most “real” warriors. In the *Jōkyū* literature, we see quite clearly that Go-Toba’s army is consistently depicted as a collection of men who were not true warriors in the vein of the Bakufu vassals. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter, where the *Rokudai* author wonders how Go-Toba’s retinue could ever know the way of battle, is perhaps the most poignant example. But in cases of actual battle, where Go-Toba’s men are inarguably professional fighting men, the same dynamic occurs. For example, whenever warriors of the Bakufu encounter Go-Toba’s soldiers, *Azuma Kagami* and the *Jōkyūki* texts both tend to describe Go-Toba’s soldiers as fleeing in a cowardly way or consistently missing their targets.²¹

The weakness of Go-Toba’s army in these texts is clear, but it is hard to ascertain what really came first. Was it the previous associations of authentic eastern warriors that influenced interpretation of Go-Toba’s failure—Go-Toba could not have won because he was using inauthentic warriors? Or did the outcome of the Disturbance itself—where eastern warriors defeated western ones—primarily fuel these associations? At either rate, a kind of cultural feedback loop was clearly operating in the mid-thirteenth century as writers explored the issue of who was a real warrior and who was not in the *Jōkyū* texts.

Warrior Proclamations on Loyalty

Owing to the marked nature of warrior identity, the narrative texts often portray warriors making various proclamations about what it means to be military men. While there is always an

²¹AK, 1221/6/14. In the original: 忘弓箭敗走; McCullough, “Shōkyūki,” p. 319, where Taneyoshi humiliatingly misses Iga Mitsusue.

element of invention in such literary dialogue, the supposed reflective comments by warriors give us great insight into how warriors were viewed at different times. It is especially instructive to compare comments made in the three variants of the war tale *Jōkyūki*, since they were each written down at different periods. As we saw in chapter one, the *Jikōjibon* was written in the 1230s, the *Rufubon* in the 1240s, and the *Maedabon* in the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century.

In the earliest *Jikōjibon Jōkyūki*, we get the most ambiguity about what it meant to be a warrior—in some cases, implication that values like loyalty and honor were not integral parts of the cultural vocabulary of warriors at all. In the *Jikōjibon* account of the battle that we saw in chapter three, the battle of Ōi crossing, the Bakufu's generals Ogasawara and Takeda are shown in an interesting discussion, speculating on the outcome of the war. Ogasawara asks Takeda what he thinks will happen, and Takeda replies:

Listen! Here's the truth of the matter. If Kamakura is victorious, we'll adhere to Kamakura, and if Kyoto is victorious, we'll adhere to Kyoto. Such is the way of those who wield the bow and arrow!²²

According to this discussion, the way of the warrior was to switch sides with whoever is victorious in battle. This bald assertion of self-interest might be surprising to anyone familiar with samurai lore, but self-interest was clearly an important part of warrior culture in the medieval period, as many scholars have pointed out.²³

This theme of self-interest is also borne out in the second war tale version, the *Rufubon*. In one scene, the Iwate clan initiates battle against Ōtake Ietō, one of Go-Toba's warriors. As they square off, Iwate Saburō taunts Ōtake by calling his loyalty into question:

²² McCulough, p. 429.

²³ Many studies in English have advanced this view: for example, Thomas Conlan (*In Little Need of Divine Intervention, State of War*); Karl Friday (*Samurai, Warfare, and the State*) and Wayne Farris (*Heavenly Warriors*).

Well then, Lord Ōtake. How sad that you are one who has made such bad plans. You were originally from Musashino province, but now you have joined the capital side. You also came from the Kanto. Samurai are a transient lot—they are grasses blown by the wind.²⁴

Once again the “way of the warrior” explained here is to be fickle, to serve different lords based on circumstance. Ōtake’s transience is that he joined the “capital side” though by rights he should have joined the Bakufu since he was an eastern warrior. Whether Ōtake was actually a Kamakura vassal is not directly stated, but that situation seems to be implied. However, the tone of this passage is quite different than that of the *Jikōjibon* selection. In the *Rufubon*, Iwate is bemoaning, rather than lauding, the fickle condition of warriors that Ōtake illustrates. To a warrior who stayed loyal to Kamakura, a man like Ōtake was to be condemned, no matter how common his behavior.

In the latest of the three *JKK* texts, the *Maedabon*, we see much less of a connection between self-interest and the way of the warrior. In the last stand of Iga Mitsusue, the Kyoto “shugo” who was attacked by Go-Toba’s men, Mitsusue and his son illustrate their interpretation of what it means to be a warrior as the enemy is closing in:

Mitsusue’s son Juō was 14 years old. Mitsusue said, “You are still here, but you are not someone who should act as a warrior. Go to Kamakura and look after my other children, and while you are young you should be raised in the house of Chiba [Tsunetane]’s older sister.”

Juō said, “As the son of one who wields the bow and arrow, am I a person who would turn away from his father’s death and run? Also, would Chiba take care to raise someone who had turned from his father and fled? I will stay by your side.”²⁵

Mitsusue defines his son as one too young to “act as a warrior.” Thus he gives Juō approval to flee if he wishes. Juō, however, feels his warrior identity just as strongly as his father, noting that

²⁴ *Rufubon*, section 45.

²⁵ *Maedabon*, section 18 A-B.

it would be cowardly to flee. Rather than be motivated by self-interest or self-preservation, young Juō is inspiring because he wishes to stay and die with his father, proving his warrior devotion and loyalty.

Clearly the idea of warrior loyalty does exist in all of these texts, even if we can say that earlier texts have more instances where loyalty is ignored or denigrated. The tension between loyalty and self-interest was no doubt quite real. Certainly in the thirteenth century warriors were faced with divided loyalties and complex interpersonal relationships that bound and broke their ties to each other and to their lords, as we saw in chapter three. The amount of time the narrative texts spend teasing out these loyalties is evidence of how important a concern loyalty was to warriors in this period even if their careers were marked by considerable disloyalty.²⁶ Nevertheless episodes highlighting these conflicts of loyalty were imagined scenes, opportunities for authors to explore their own views of loyalty through the mouths of historical characters. In other words, loyalty and disloyalty to one's lord was much more of a concern for the compilers of these texts than the participants of 1221 themselves—whether for political reasons or pure entertainment.

The defections we saw in chapter three are some of the scenes where the awkwardness of author interpolation becomes apparent. In the case of Miura Taneyoshi (section I, case 1), the author(s) of *Jikōjibon JKK* betray their own point of view by how they phrase Taneyoshi's declaration of loyalty to Go-Toba. Instead of simply saying that he is glad to join Go-Toba, Taneyoshi says, "I have indeed been thinking of forsaking Kamakura and my ancestral home in Miura in order to join Go Toba's service here in the capital."²⁷ The text has Taneyoshi

²⁶ See Karl Friday's investigation of warrior self-interest in *Samurai, Warfare, and the State*, pp. 147-145.

²⁷ McCullough, p. 186.

incriminate himself in gross disloyalty by exaggerating his own defection, as if he is delighting in “forsaking” his ties and homeland. Surely a warrior caught in a conflict of loyalty would not describe his defection this way—it is the imagination of a writer who clearly holds Taneyoshi in low opinion.

Yet it must be said that in other areas of the *Jikōjibon* Taneyoshi is given a chance to redeem himself. He is shown fighting bravely against the Bakufu throughout the tale, and as Go-Toba’s defeat looms nearer he Taneyoshi announces his intention to stay and die for his lord right there in the palace.²⁸ However, the emperor tells him to make his last stand somewhere else—not out of concern for Taneyoshi, but so Go-Toba himself can stay out of harm’s way. In the text, Taneyoshi is appalled at this behavior, calling it “shameful,” and regrets that he ever joined Go-Toba’s revolt. But we should not simply see this scene as evidence that bravery and honor were inescapable values of medieval Japan held by warriors of all stripes. Rather, we should be aware that this scene is first and foremost a narrative tactic to humanize the enemy, thus providing cathartic pathos. Taneyoshi’s regret and condemnation of Go-Toba boosts the reader’s opinion of him while localizing blame on Go-Toba as the selfish leader. It gives Taneyoshi’s story arc emotional resonance and imbues his downfall with cathartic elements of tragedy.

Comparison between earlier and later versions of the same incident can also reveal the increasing solidification of warrior identity in medieval Japan. Mitsusue’s reasons for staying loyal to the Bakufu are one intriguing example. In the previous chapter, I mentioned that Mitsusue was related by marriage to Hojo Yoshitoki, but our focus there was on Chikahiro—who, unlike Mitsusue, had no marriage ties to the Hojo and was thus an easier target for Go-Toba. But how was Mitsusue himself understood in the Jōkyū texts, and how do they evaluate his loyalty to the Bakufu? A comparison in the *Rufubon* and *Maedabon JKK* of Chikahiro’s and Mitsusue’s

²⁸ McCullough, pp. 433 and 437.

divergent paths gives us additional insight into the solidification of medieval perceptions of warriors.

In the earlier *Rufubon*, Go-Toba and his generals are discussing the likelihood of winning over Chikahiro and Mitsusue to their cause. Miura Taneyoshi advises Go-Toba in the following scene:

Taneyoshi said, “If you summon Chikahiro he will probably come. But since Iga Mitsusue is related to the Gon Daifu Yoshitoki, even if you summon him he wouldn’t come. No matter what we should first summon them both, and if they do not come, then we can send out people to kill them.”

To this plan Go-Toba said, “That is absolutely what we should do,” and he sent out a messenger to the Lay Monk Officer Chikahiro’s place.²⁹

The difference between Chikahiro and Mitsusue in this scene is very clearly the issue of marriage ties, as I mentioned in chapter three. Taneyoshi doubts their success recruiting Mitsusue because of his relationship to Yoshitoki. Compare this cut-and-dried assessment of Mitsusue with the later *Maedabon* text:

Taneyoshi said, “Chikahiro is not one who wields the bow and arrow. You should be able to summon him and persuade him [to join you], and then you can send him [to battle]. But Mitsusue is not only a Genji, but he is also Yoshitoki’s brother-in-law and from a family that wields the bow and arrow. Even if you summoned him, he probably would never come. I believe you should send men to kill him. Even so, perhaps we should first summon both of them?”³⁰

In the *Maedabon* version, Mitsusue’s marriage ties are only part of the equation. The bigger reason, stated up front, is a more essential difference between the two men. Chikahiro is not one who “wields the bow and arrow”—in other words, is not a warrior—while Mitsusue is. His true warrior nature, and the fact that he is of Genji (Minamoto) stock, are cited as the real

²⁹ *Rufubon*, section 16.

³⁰ *Maedabon*, section 15A.

reasons he will most likely remain true to the Bakufu. His brother-in-law relationship with Yoshitoki is commented on but only as additional evidence. The fact that Mitsusue is referred to as a Minamoto is one more resonance with the theme of “true” eastern warriors we saw earlier. We see how the contrast between Mitsusue and Chikahiro has now been recast in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century as a fundamental question of identity: one of them is a true warrior, and the other is not.

Yoritomo: From Respectful Servant to Impudent Ruler

In section I of chapter two, I demonstrated the positive legacy of Minamoto no Yoritomo that continued to characterize writings of the thirteenth century. Yoritomo’s decisive leadership, his political acuity, his respect for the throne, and his military power were all seen as beneficial contributions to the state. By the fourteenth century, however, the picture of Yoritomo was being recast according to the cultural realities of later generations. These images of Yoritomo make up an intriguing site to investigate changes in warrior identity over the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In the *Masukagami* (c. 1333-1376) a few notes of ambivalence and negativity have crept into the narrative about Yoritomo. On the positive end, his procession to the capital is still described admirably as “an awe-inspiring spectacle” and his resignation of posts is noted. But sullen phrases about the decline of court authority punctuate the narrative and become an increasing preoccupation of the author:

Thereafter, Yoritomo wielded more and more power; it was he who replaced the Taira as the new guardian of the throne. He lived in a village called Kamakura in Sagami Province, but to his way of thinking he held the world in the palm of his hand.

It was at that time [his resignation of court posts] that he was named constable-general of all the provinces, and that he moved to gather stewardships into the hands

of his own retainers. And it must surely have been then that imperial authority in our nation began to decline.³¹

True, Yoritomo is still afforded the terminology of restraint seen in earlier texts—“guardian of the throne,” and elsewhere “guardian of the state”—but his motives are no longer pure. He personally thinks he has “the world in the palm of his hand,” an attribution of arrogance unthinkable in earlier depictions of Yoritomo.

A self-conscious proclivity to pinpoint exactly when imperial authority began to decline is not unknown to earlier texts; Jien, of course, takes this idea of decline as his overarching teleology, and writers ever since the rise of the Fujiwara have mused about how and why Japanese emperors no longer presided over centralized rule as did emperors in China. But the way *Masukagami* posits Yoritomo as the beginning of the end of courtier rule is entirely retrospective, and alien to the mindset of the early to mid-thirteenth century. As we saw in chapter two, everyone who lived in proximity to the Genpei Wars saw Yoritomo as a semi-salvific figure who *restored* peace and imperial authority, not as one who destroyed it.

The overall tone of *Masukagami* is far from polemical in this regard, however. Rather than excoriating warriors or incompetent leaders who paved the way for court decline, the tendency is to avoid direct commentary about Japan’s state of affairs in the first place. Instead the narrative is content to focus on court proceedings as if they are in a vacuum, undisturbed by the happenings in Kamakura. Many dismiss the *Masukagami*’s function as a work of history precisely because it focuses on courtly heroes as if escaping from the reality of warrior rule.³²

But these brief statements about Yoritomo give us good insight into later medieval court views of

³¹ Perkins, pp. 47-48.

³² Saito, Aruki. “‘Masukagami’ ni okeru shōkan,” in *Kamakura, Muromachi jidai no Genji monogatari*, edited by Misumi Yōichi (Tokyo: Ōfū, 2007): p. 123. Indeed, the chapter dealing with the Jōkyū Disturbance (“The New Island Guard”) and the final chapters dealing with Go-Daigo’s victory over the Kamakura Bakufu are the only times military conflict is mentioned.

warriors. Negative statements about warrior dominance bubble up to the surface, but they are suffused with powerlessness rather than anger. After the comment about Yoritomo having the world in his hands, the author says, “Of course, you all know these things, and I fear it may simply be tiresome to rehearse them.”³³ Such a statement perfectly encapsulates the kind of resignation toward court-Bakufu relations that existed after the long decline of court power: why would one wish to talk more of these upsetting matters? This statement is another marked contrast to the early thirteenth-century texts, which wanted to talk about the meaning of the Jōkyū Disturbance, and talk about it at length.

This ambivalence about Yoritomo exists in other later medieval texts as well. Though not a focus of this study, there is a wide range of texts that might be classified under the umbrella of Genpei War literature, such as the *Heike Monogatari* (Tale of the Taira Clan), *Genpei Jōsuiki* (Record of the Vicissitudes of the Minamoto and Taira Clans), *Soga Monogatari* (Tale of the Soga Brothers), and *Gikeiki* (Tale of Yoshitsune) as well as other scattered tales and works of performance literature. In these we see a clear-cut difference between two opposite views of Yoritomo, as literary scholar Elizabeth Oyler has investigated. Her treatment of the full range of Genpei literature throws light on important tropes and characterizations in these medieval tales, but our particular interest is in their depictions of Yoritomo.

Oyler investigates *Heiji Monogatari*, *Genpei Jōsuiki*, and other tales which carry scenes where Yoritomo’s future success is revealed to one of his supporters in a dream. These dream sequences have different details, but they each show Yoritomo’s “specialness and rectitude” as the promised future leader of the Bakufu.³⁴ In some cases Yoritomo is shown straddling the realm

³³ p. 47. In the original, “imasarani mōsumo nakanaka naredo,” literally “to say further would be even more...” The meaning of “tiresome” is implied.

³⁴ Oyler, p. 34.

of Japan in these dreams, conveying the expansiveness of his destiny.³⁵ Other texts which focus on the Soga family are equally positive about Yoritomo, but result in a different portrait. The *Soga Monogatari* and other “tales of the sword” show Yoritomo adjudicating a sibling conflict.³⁶ Oyler perceptively notes the political implications of these tales, as they stand in for Yoritomo’s own consolidation of control over his own family and remove him from any damaging elements.³⁷ Here Yoritomo is the “fair-minded judge” using political skill and restraint to pacify the situations in the tales. It is important to note that both of these elements, Yoritomo’s expansive rule and his fair-minded restraint, were part of the legacy of Yoritomo we already saw in the early thirteenth-century texts mentioned in chapter two.

Yet these dual images of Yoritomo as a beneficent leader are in deep contrast to another strain of Genpei literature. As I mentioned in the introduction, Yoritomo relied on his brother Yoshitsune to lead the Minamoto forces against the Taira, but enmity between the two brothers resulted in Yoshitsune’s death in 1189. Thus it might not be surprising that in *Gikeiki* and other tales which focus on Yoshitsune, Yoritomo comes off a much darker personality. Some of these tales have shown Yoritomo as far from being a benevolent and restrained ruler, instead portraying him as a cold and even malicious tyrant.³⁸

In *Gikeiki*, Yoritomo is initially pleased with his brother’s service, but Kajiwaru Kagetoki slanders Yoshitsune in reports to Kamakura.³⁹ Though Yoritomo initially decides to wait and hear

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 39-42.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 116.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 135.

³⁸ Ivan Morris, “The Nobility of Failure,” p. 78. Morris questions whether Yoritomo genuinely had a “cruel nature” or simply made “cool political calculations” based on his readings of *Gikeiki*. Yet since his interest is primarily in the legends and what they reflect about Japanese culture, he ultimately does not answer the question.

³⁹ This is the same Kajiwaru Kagetoki whom we saw in chapter two, section III, later executed by Yorie for suspected treason in 1201.

both sides, he turns increasingly on Yoshitsune. *Gikeiki* shows him obsessed with killing his brother, to the point that his own retainers find his actions unreasonable.⁴⁰ The text describes his behavior as “heartless” and “cold” and his villainy is set into relief by the sympathetic treatments of Yoshitsune and his retainer Benkei, which take up the majority of the tale.⁴¹ Ivan Morris made Yoshitsune one of the archetypes of the trope he called “the nobility of failure” (in a book with that title, published 1975) and notes Yoritomo’s jealousy, “cruel perversity,” and “unmitigated villainy” in the Yoshitsune legends.⁴²

Elizabeth Oyler also notes this ambivalence about Yoritomo’s portrayal in medieval texts: in some tales he is the “fair-minded judge” and in the Yoshitsune tales he is the main villain.⁴³ Her assessment that these two extremes formed part of a complex spectrum of cultural imagination in medieval Japan is also well-founded. Moreover, Oyler departs from Ivan Morris’ attitude by recognizing that it is difficult to find accounts that actually hold Yoritomo culpable for Yoshitsune’s death—instead he is “pushed to the shadows” much like in the *Masukagami*.⁴⁴ Her analysis shows that Yoritomo by no means was entirely negative in the Genpei texts, and convincingly argues that both views could co-exist in medieval Japan.

It is worth mentioning that Oyler’s book for the most part resists treating differences in textual accounts as part of linear developments in time. Oyler is pushing against literary

⁴⁰ Helen McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, p. 153.

⁴¹ See McCullough, *Yoshitsune*, pp. 139-140 for these terms. In the original: “looked cold/evil” 悪しく見えさせ給 and “sounded heartless” 情けなくぞ聞こえける).

⁴² Morris, *Nobility of Failure*, pp. 78 and 104. Morris does an adequate job of questioning the authenticity of these portraits.

⁴³ See Oyler, pp. 31 and 135.

⁴⁴ Oyler, p. 30.

scholarship that has been too obsessed with categorization—either by demarcating minute textual lineages or dividing medieval texts into problematic binaries of written/oral literature or *wabun/kanbun* writing.⁴⁵ In this context it is understandable that she instead chooses to emphasize the *commonalities* between these stories: their shared cultural tropes, the similar interaction between the texts and their performative and interpretive processes, and the fluidity within a body of tales that were constantly changing and drawing from each other. In her own words, she is viewing the texts through a synchronic, not diachronic, usage of time.⁴⁶ Regardless of this overall tendency, with the stories about Yoritomo Oyler does engage thoughtfully with how these depictions of the first shogun changed over time. She convincingly argues that from the earliest *Heike* variants to the *kowakamai* genre of performance tales, Yoritomo's negative motives in killing Yoshitsune and other family members were gradually rationalized away.⁴⁷

Yet what is interesting is that it is only with the rise of literature on Yoshitsune and the greater Minamoto family rivalries that Yoritomo's actions needed to be rationalized in this way. The earliest texts, as we saw in chapter two, almost unanimously praised Yoritomo and saw no contradictions in his character. Here, like with the ideals of bravery in the war tales, we see later writers of the Muromachi period reshaping the import of the stories of the twelfth and thirteenth century to reflect the harsher realities of warrior rule in their own time.

Conclusions

Though being a warrior (*bushi*) rather than a mere soldier (*heishi*) was clearly a marked

⁴⁵ See her introduction.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid, pp. 97-104. She also says that the increasing emphasis on order reflects the problem of great disorder in the Muromachi period, p. 144.

identity even before the Kamakura period, what this identity entailed was not clear. The earliest texts suggested true *bushi* were brave, skilled, and loyal. Moreover, associations between warriors and the barbaric east ensured that warriors were primarily defined as unique and strange “others” who lived by a different code than those in the midst of civilization. However, the actual depictions of warriors we see in the Jōkyū texts reveals that many of our assumptions about warriors—loyalty and bravery, most significantly—were anything but airtight in the early Kamakura period. Finally, we see in the changing perceptions of warrior identity in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries an increasing ambivalence in how warriors are depicted. Yoritomo himself, who was always portrayed as a restrained and respectful ruler in the earlier texts, becomes a more shady and shifty character in the later medieval literature. The fact that this most positive of warrior paragons could have been imbued with such unsavory traits is evidence of the increasing power and impudence of warriors in the Muromachi period, as later writers bemoaned the low status of the imperial court in the social and political reality of their day.

II. The “Decline” of the Court

Unlike perceptions of warrior, the idea of being a “courtier” was never clearly defined in the Heian and early Kamakura periods. If warriors (*bushi*) were constantly being defined as “others” to those at the political center of Japan, courtiers were the ones most often creating the definitions. An investigation of the terminology for courtiers will show the haphazard representations of courtiers in pre-modern Japan. At the same time, as warrior government proved over time a powerful, and eventually an unstoppable, alternative to imperial rule, courtiers were confronted with an increasing sense of their own loss of power and prestige. This preoccupation with the “decline of the court” helped courtiers define themselves in opposition to

warriors. Our task in this section is to tease out the perceptions of courtiers from texts that often do not give us direct references to what a “courtier” really meant, forcing us to read more actively between the lines.

Terminology: Did ‘Courtiers’ Exist?

First, we need to look at the terminology used to designate courtiers in pre-modern Japan. The most common term for courtiers in pre-modern Japan was *kugyō* (公卿). However, this term is not a reliable indicator of any specific cultural representation. First of all, it is a hybrid word, originally meaning “ministers and counselors,” with 公 standing for the top four ministers of the state⁴⁸ and 卿 standing for anyone with the designation ‘counselor’ (*nagon* 納言) or a member of the *sangi* (参議).⁴⁹ Thus unequivocally defining *kugyō* as a general term for “courtier” is misleading—even taken together it is a term that lacks comprehensiveness, and might be better translated as “top-ranked officials.” There is also considerable variation throughout the pre-modern era in *kugyō*’s range of meaning: many Heian texts seem to use *kugyō* only for the rank of counselor or below, while others continued to use it for top ministers as well.⁵⁰

Moreover, even from early writings like *Nihon Shoki*, the term *kugyō* was often paired with additional characters referring to other categories of officials.⁵¹ The tendency to throw the

⁴⁸ In other words, the four posts designated “minister” (*daijin* 大臣): Grand Minister (*dajōdaijin*), Minister of the Left (*sadaijin*), Minister of the Right (*udaijin*), and Minister of the Center (*naidaijin*).

⁴⁹ Counselors were divided into Major, Middle, and Minor Counselor (*dainagon*, *chūnagon*, and *shōnagon*, respectively). See *SNKBZ* 41, *Hogen monogatari*, notes on pp. 255 and 262 for the breakdown in meaning of *kugyō*.

⁵⁰ For example, *Utsuho monogatari*, *Hamamatsu chūnagon monogatari*, and *Ōkagami*, use *kugyō* in lists with *daijin* (大臣) separately, suggesting *kugyō* was not thought to include the four minister positions.

⁵¹ In *Nihon Shoki*, the most common combinations are *kugyō daiфу* (大夫 “commissioners”) or *kugyō hyakuryō* (百寮, “hundred officials”). See *SNKBZ* 3, p.246, 4, pp. 194-5 and 350 for *daiфу*; *SNKBZ* 3, p. 242, 3, pp. 479-486 for *hyakuryō*.

label *kugyō* together with other terms for officials implies that *kugyō* alone could not stand for all courtiers; thus a combination of terms was needed to suggest a totality of people at court. Further, a single pre-modern text might include multiple combinations of different words each referring to various kinds of court officials, illustrating some degree of haphazardness in these usages. It is as if no single term could adequately encapsulate all the people that served at court, at least in the Heian and Kamakura periods. Nor, might we add, would there be a need for such a term. In a small world of a few thousand, hyper-conscious about status and minute gradations in posts and privileges, internal distinctions of rank were much more pressing. In other words, “courtier” was in these periods never understood as a category unto itself. Instead different sub-groups of what we would consider courtiers were understood separately—as diverse categories of officialdom delineated by various gradations of rank.

By the time we get to the Kamakura period, some of these compound terms became more formulaically used as stock phrases for any high-ranking courtier, the most common iteration being *kugyō tenjōbito* (公卿殿上人).⁵² Whereas *kugyō* usually referred to ministers and counselors of third rank or higher, *tenjōbito* were any who could have audience with the emperor, which could include officials of the fourth and fifth rank. The phrase *kugyō tenjōbito* is the most common term for courtiers in the Jōkyū texts, but throughout the thirteenth century this compound term could be broken into component parts that were still meaningful. For example, in *Towazugatari* (written in the early fourteenth century), Lady Nijō uses *kugyō* on its own as well as in the compound *kugyō/tenjōbito*. However she clearly maintains a difference between the two terms, intentionally alternating between *kugyō* and *tenjōbito* for different scenarios and even

⁵² See *Hōgen Monogatari*, SNKBZ 41, pp. 220, 222, 255, and 259; *Heiji Monogatari*, SNKBZ 41, pp. 419, 420, 433, 443 and 483; Brown and Ishida, pp. 137 and 181. The compound term is also used frequently in *Heike Monogatari* (*Kakuichi-bon*).

occasionally drawing attention to their different meanings and the social stratification they implied.⁵³ Jien's usage in his *Gukanshō* also reminds us that these terms were not stationary, but part of a ladder of advancement, with *kugyō* being a step between *tenjōbito* and becoming a member of the *sangi*.⁵⁴

But beginning in the fourteenth century, another term began to assume the more general meaning of “courtier.” The term *kuge* (公家) which today means “courtier,” originally was used in the Heian period only to denote the court or the emperor himself, and this usage continued into the Kamakura period.⁵⁵ In the Namboku period (1336-1392), texts like *Taiheiki* began using *kuge* regularly in both its older and newer senses. For example, near the end of the tale, a character in the *Taiheiki* bemoans the world in which “*bushi* (warriors) are clothed and fully fed, while *kuge* are brought to starvation.”⁵⁶ *Kuge*'s position parallel to the corresponding *bushi*, the most common word for warriors, makes it clear that *kuge* refers to courtiers here. A few pages later, however, the text mentions a message being sent to the *kuge*, and the *kuge*'s imperial order being ignored—in this second instance *kuge* clearly means “court” or “the emperor.”⁵⁷

For courtier men and women, who comprised the majority of literate people in Japan, their identity did not need to be explained or demarcated. It was only the “other,” the warrior, that needed such marking. However, this does not suggest that courtiers did not exist historically. As historians we can say that “courtier”—an educated aristocratic official in the state

⁵³ See, for example, SNKBZ 47, pp. 198 and 318.

⁵⁴ Brown and Ishida, p. 161.

⁵⁵ See *Hōgen*, pp. 383-84; *Jukunshō*, SNKBZ 51, pp. 26, 135, 466, and 478; *Shasekishū*, SNBKZ 52, pp.66, 112, 537, 555, and 604.

⁵⁶ *Taiheiki* 4, SNKBZ 57, p. 370. Mass traces a similar phenomenon with the term *buke* (武家) which originally meant the headquarters of a military government but later came to mean warrior family or “warrior” itself. See *Antiquity and Anachronism*, pp. 49-50.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 388. This is also the interpretation of the editors, who gloss *kuge* as “chōtei” (court) in the *gendaigo yaku*.

bureaucracy or provincial government—is a useful category to understand pre-modern society. At the same time, courtiers would not be forced to develop ideas of their own identity until confronted more strongly by warriors who no longer stayed in their marginal sphere, but encroached upon matters of governance, culture, and precedent that courtiers had always assumed were their, and only their, prerogatives.

The Taira Comparison: Courtiers in Warrior's Clothing

One of the first ways we see courtier identity being teased out in the narrative texts is in the contrast between the Taira and the Minamoto. The *Jōkyū* texts, like the Genpei texts mentioned in the previous section, wrestled with the meaning of Yoritomo's rise and the dramatic events of the Genpei War. In the narrative texts, part of this explanation of Minamoto victory inherently drew upon the ideas of authentic eastern warriors that we saw had a long history in Japanese discourse. But when confronted with the strength and bravery of the Minamoto—however much invention was playing a role—writers could not help casting the defeated Taira in language of courtly life.

The *Rokudai Shōjiki* brings out some of these interesting dynamics in describing the Taira downfall. The author describes in great detail the Taira flight from the capital, focusing on the vulnerability of men who held high posts and were now forced to leave the capital they saw as their home. In an extremely lyrical passage, the author describes their state of mind and body as they escape to the west:

The fleeing Taira pushed their imperial double-bowed boats onto the water, but this was no peaceful procession to a summer palace... The loud cry of a plover from the islets would jolt them again and keep them from sleep. The simple clang of an oar on the steep banks would pierce their hearts with fear. White egrets gathering in the far-off pines looked more like the streaming flags of barbarians, and geese squawking from the distant

seas sounded more like the splashing oars of war boats on their path. The salty wind tore at their flesh. Their fine powdered faces now bedraggled, their sunken eyes lost in the dull green waves—it was too hard even to cry at the thought of home.⁵⁸

The author imbues the Taira flight with tragic meaning. The tone is sympathetic but the author's sense of irony at the very least conveys some sense of vindication at the Taira's comeuppance—earlier the text credits their defeat to “the results of evil karma and the bonds of fate.”⁵⁹ Attention is drawn here to the incongruity between their courtly accoutrements and their now-decrepit circumstances: imperial boats now being used for refugees, “fine powdered faces” now wind-whipped and bedraggled. Which brings us to the more broader point: the Taira here are being painted first and foremost as courtiers on the run from the superior military forces of “true” warriors—the Minamoto.

As they flee the Taira are terrified of encroaching war boats, and even white birds remind them of “barbarian flags.” Readers would also know that the Minamoto standards were white, so here is another association between true eastern warriors and barbarians. Jien portrays the Taira-Minamoto distinction in much the same way. He describes an intriguing scene where a courtier named Norisue confronts Go-Shirakawa with an ultimatum: now is the time to abandon the Taira and support the Minamoto. To justify his position Norisue explains that the Minamoto warriors in the east (東国武士) even down to the lowliest recruit can all use the bow and arrow well.⁶⁰ Compared to them, he says, the Taira have no hope. Jien ends the selection with Go-Shirakawa saying somewhat disingenuously that he had always planned to support the Minamoto, but

⁵⁸ Appendix, p. 229.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Brown and Ishida, p. 135.

regardless there is a clear implication that the Taira are *not* true warriors skilled at the bow and arrow. Once more they are cast as poseurs.

From the passage above, we see how *Rokudai Shōjiki* was highlighting an early version of a trope—the defeated warrior as emasculated courtier—that would become much more visible and famous in versions of *Heike Monogatari*. As David Bialock has shown, the variants of *Heike Monogatari* build upon this idea of the courtly nobility of the fallen Taira. In many episodes the Heike storytellers imbue the Taira with exaggerated glory and grandeur, suggesting their status as a new center of power and a surprising reversal of earlier ideas of warriors as barbaric.⁶¹ Though Bialock suggestively concludes a tension between the “barbarian within” and the warrior as new paragon ran concurrently through medieval discursive space, it is also important to contextualize these tropes in their narrative context. Heightening the splendor of the Taira, regardless of cultural or historical connotations, compounds the sadness and emotion of their downfall. Either way, this shared approach between *Rokudai* and the *Heike* texts is one of the many reasons to see *RS* as a pioneer in the genre of vernacular tales centered warriors, and a missing piece of the medieval Japanese literary canon.

Returning to the content of the *Rokudai* passage above, what elements of courtier representation can we glean from such portrayals of the Taira as adopted courtiers? The *Rokudai* author, himself a courtier, sympathizes with the Taira noblemen even though his political allegiance is firmly with the Minamoto. Though he had no comprehensive term to label the Taira escapees as “courtiers” or “aristocrats” as we would in our parlance, he betrays in the selection above some of the attributes that made these Taira so different from the approaching barbarian warriors. The sense of leisure implied by a “peaceful procession” to summer palaces is an interesting picture into the life of frequent ceremonies and outings that surely our author would

⁶¹ Bialock, *Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories*, pp. 189-200.

know only too well. Though the highly ritualized and political nature of actual courtier outings has been washed away in sepia tones of nostalgia, nevertheless there is truth in the contrast between the activities of the Taira courtiers and the lives of actual fighting men.

The stress of having to be constantly vigilant is another aspect of warrior life that is unnatural to the Taira in the *RS* selection, as their fear never lets them rest the way they presumably might wish. Not being as tuned to the realities of battle, they see enemies everywhere and mistake birds for signs of attack. Finally their attention to finery is commented upon pointedly. These courtiers appear to have little experience braving the elements and are losing their fine clothes and makeup to the harsh winds.

As courtiers like Jien and the *Rokudai* author lauded the power of authentic eastern warriors, they automatically imagined the plight of the Taira from their own experience as court officials who knew nothing of “the way of battle.” In so doing they give us valuable insight into perceptions of courtiers in the early Kamakura period. At the same time, their lack of self-awareness and direct commentary on what it meant to be a courtier shows that courtier identity was still being formulated, in response to the warrior “other,” over the course of the thirteenth century.

Sanetomo’s Appointment: The Decline of Precedent

In chapter two we saw that one of the tragedies leading up to the Jōkyū Disturbance was the assassination of Minamoto no Sanetomo, Yoritomo’s son and the third shogun of the Kamakura Bakufu. Sanetomo was killed in Kamakura during a celebration of his appointment as Minister of the Right, and all texts note the locale. However, the importance of Kamakura as the site of Sanetomo’s ceremony and the significance of Sanetomo’s actions there would take on new meanings as later writers engaged with the story.

The scene in the earliest text, *Rokudai Shōjiki*, gives instructive insight into the early thirteenth century understanding of Sanetomo and his ceremony.

When the time came for his appointment ceremony at Hachiman shrine in Kamakura, he surrounded himself with a veritable wall of soldiers protecting him and leading him in an ox-cart. After all the men of high rank had assembled they began the procession to the pine mountains of Kamakura, and they walked up the plum peaks adorned with the scent of courtier perfumes. Sanetomo wore robes of fine brocade, ignoring the color prohibitions of his rank, and he had on ornaments of fine metals and precious stones that fairly glowed. His ceremony looked grander even than that of a regent, and I wondered whether I was not really seeing the procession of the Emperor.

First of all, Sanetomo's decision to have the ceremony in Kamakura receives no comment. What is emphasized is the pomp and circumstance of his entourage. It soon becomes clear what is really rankling the *Rokudai* author: Sanetomo's courtly pretensions. His entourage has applied the "scent of courtier perfumes," and Sanetomo wears brocade robes with colors beyond his rank, looking even grander than that of a regent. There is a tone of sarcasm as the author pretends to be confused about whether he is seeing the emperor himself—a clever rhetorical device meant to censure Sanetomo's arrogance. The problem for the *Rokudai* author is that Sanetomo is trying to appropriate courtly ritual, precedent, and protocol without having earned it: he is trying, in other words, to be like a courtier. Once again we see courtier attributes described not through references to courtiers themselves, but in unwittingly marking aspects of courtier identity through the imitations of supposedly derelict warriors.

In the *Jikōjibon* and *Rufubon JKK* versions, the fact that Sanetomo's appointment ceremony would be held in Kamakura is also mentioned incidentally and without any awareness of impropriety. In fact, the *Rufubon* text goes back and forth from calling the gathering an "appointment ceremony" (拝賀) to simply a "banquet" (大饗)—thus its connection with

Sanetomo's court appointment is even less marked.⁶² Both versions are content to focus on the sadness and emotional pain of the assassination rather than on Sanetomo's character or proclivities, as did the *Rokudai* author. The *Rufubon* text, for example, uses the long return voyage of the courtiers from Kamakura back to Kyoto to dramatize their emotional pain, but does not imbue the location of Kamakura itself with any real significance.⁶³

This offhanded and un-accentuated treatment of Sanetomo's ceremony in Kamakura in the earlier *JKK* texts is a stark contrast to the later *Maedabon* version, which has a completely new anecdote inserted into the story. After Sanetomo's decides to have his ceremony in Kamakura, the *Maedabon* text reads:

About this matter the courtiers had a discussion. Azechi Middle Counselor Mitsuchika said, "First of all, if you consider the precedents of the past, this will not do. Sanetomo's father Yoritomo came right away to the capital for his appointment as Major Captain of the Right, and his ceremony followed protocol. Why should Sanetomo decide on his own to stay in the Kanto, and in the end have the ministers come out to the borders of the countryside?... I have never heard of such a thing!"⁶⁴

The courtier Mitsuchika is dumbfounded at Sanetomo's flagrant transgression of protocol by forcing government ministers to travel to Kamakura instead of doing the ceremony properly in Kyoto. The annoyance of this burden to the courtiers is transparent in what the character Mitsuchika says, condemning Sanetomo for not coming "right away" to the capital as Yoritomo did. There is, I think, a tone of entitlement on the part of this courtier. He seems ruffled that Sanetomo is forcing them to accommodate his whims—that someone else is calling the shots.

The debate about Kamakura continues:

⁶² *Rufubon*, section 4.

⁶³ It does this primarily through a *waka*, which is also replicated in the *Maedabon* version but with less coherence.

⁶⁴ *Maedabon*, section 4A.

When he had said this, the person who was regent at the time was there at the second Kōgyoku estate and said, “Lord Mitsuchika’s argument is wise and reasonable. Yet even so, I think there must be imperial approval for what Sanetomo has specified. Even though we disorder the ancient rituals and transgress protocol, ministerial duties are not our own private concern; they also must have divine approval.”⁶⁵

This exchange is highly suggestive for a number of reasons. The unnamed regent—perhaps unnamed because in the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century such details would now be gone from general historical memory—justifies Sanetomo’s plans by assuming they must have “divine approval.” But rather than reflecting the regent’s faithful obedience to divine intervention, there is more of a tone of resignation here. Clearly the regent agrees with Mitsuchika’s assessment that Sanetomo’s decision is a breach of protocol and precedent. The phrase “disorder the ancient rituals and transgress protocol” (旧儀を乱たり格式を違せば) is actually stronger and more negative than Mitsuchika’s original complaint. So the regent’s position is not that Sanetomo is right, but that there is no use fighting what cannot be helped. For whatever reason, divine approval is on Sanetomo’s side, and the courtiers have no choice but to resign themselves to an age where precedent and protocol count for little.

The late thirteenth/early fourteenth-century *Maedabon* text is the only version of *Jōkyūki* that includes this strange anecdote. As I mentioned, the earlier *Jikōjibon* and *Rufubon JKK* pass over the relocation to Kamakura without comment. The new anecdote shows the increasing preoccupation of courtiers with the decline of standards in protocol and social graces—concerns that already caught the attention of Jien and other courtiers in the early Kamakura period. But what is newly evident in this *Maedabon* anecdote is a sense of frustration, not merely with declining standards, but with declining political control as well. Instead of showing deference to the court, Sanetomo is presumptuously forcing courtiers to abandon their precedents and follow his martial whims.

⁶⁵ *Maedabon*, sections 4A-4B.

Though the *Maedabon* courtiers' debate about Sanetomo never presents any direct representations of warriors, the courtiers' image of him is clearly different from that in the early thirteenth-century texts. In the *Rokudai* selection, Sanetomo is appropriating court ritual, trying to be like a courtier; in the *Maedabon* he is obstinately degrading and ignoring court customs by insisting on his independence in Kamakura. Rather than a figurehead military leader who is trying to be a courtier, Sanetomo is now an impertinent and powerful warrior leader ensconced in Kamakura, ordering courtiers to follow his anti-courtly propensities. The *Maedabon* author is imagining Sanetomo as a powerful, independent and entitled ruler more authentic to the Hōjō regency at the turn of the fourteenth century than the odd Shogun he was in 1219. This surely reflects a later warrior-based view of the courtier-warrior relationship, a world of warrior entitlement and a palpable sense of courtier impotence and frustration. The *Maedabon* picture of defeated, impotent courtiers and impertinent warriors showcases even within a short anecdote the cultural perceptions of the late Kamakura period.

Moreover, this passage in *Maedabon* is one of the few in any of the Jōkyū texts that actually use the newer term “courtier,” *kuge* (公家). The rest of the *Maedabon* tends to replicate the earlier terminology of the *Rufubon* text, calling court officials by the general hybrid term we saw before (*kugyō tenjōbito*).⁶⁶ This scene, however, reveals strikingly the changes that are already taking place in the representations of courtiers around the turn of the fourteenth century. When embellishing the text with a new anecdote not based on the *Rufubon*, the *Maedabon* author(s) cannot help resorting to the more recent term *kuge*, a word which was beginning to imply a unified social category and not merely a collection of people of rank.

Finally, this comparison of stories about Sanetomo's appointment shows another

⁶⁶ See for example 6B and 8A.

important aspect of courtier representation in the medieval period. The primacy of precedent comes through these selections, as it comes through any court writing from throughout the Heian, Kamakura, or even later periods. Concerns about the decline of court protocol and precedents is evident in texts throughout Japanese history—in some sense, each generation of any society will inherently posit a grander, more ideal age before it. Jien, the *Rokudai* author, and other early thirteenth-century writers complained that few people in their day were able to properly understand ceremony or practice due diligence in their court posts. However, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the preoccupation with precedent took on new meanings as courtiers began to define themselves corporately as the upholders of precedent against the whims of warriors. For the first time, the threat to court precedent was deemed not from internal incompetence of other courtiers, but from external warrior society. This new solidarity of courtiers in opposition to warriors is the final stage of the evolution of courtier identity into a genuine cultural and social self-awareness.

Conclusions

Unlike the representations of warriors, courtiers were never well-defined as a group in early Japan. Courtier society was a small and fragmented world where minute gradations in rank and office within the court meant much more than engagement with Japanese society beyond Kyoto. However, the need to understand and explain the uniqueness of warriors caused courtiers to unintentionally reveal attributes of their own culture. In the defeated Taira courtiers saw their own incompatibility with the lives required of martial men. And as anecdotes on the appointment ceremony of Sanetomo show, courtiers by the early fourteenth century betrayed a preoccupation with the decline of court standards and their own power. But fittingly, it was in this more oppositional understanding of courtier-warrior relations that courtier perceptions of their identity

finally developed into a unique cultural self-awareness.

What have we learned about the rise of courtier and warrior perceptions and myths about the Jōkyū Disturbance in this chapter?

- 1) A warrior (*bushi*) was a marked category, different from ordinary soldiers, since early Japanese society and often explained by tropes of bravery and loyalty. However these ideas of loyalty were first and foremost literary inventions, belied by evidence even within the texts that warriors acted often out of self-interest.
- 2) Overlapping associations between barbarians and the east fueled concepts of warriors as a unique “other” which proved to have explanatory power for the struggles of the Genpei War. Yoritomo’s warriors were seen as authentic warriors, and by contrast the Taira were depicted as courtiers in borrowed clothes.
- 3) Later generations of writers bemoaned the decline of the court and the power of warriors, showing the realities of Muromachi-period Japan. It was only with this oppositional attitude between courtiers and warriors that perceptions of courtiers evolved into a unique and definable set of characteristics.

This chapter’s investigation of changing cultural identities shows how what it meant to be a courtier or warrior was being re-negotiated throughout the early medieval period. As people from warrior or courtier backgrounds began to live in increasing opposition and animosity to each other, their image of each other and of themselves solidified. But though fourteenth-century writers of Jōkyū texts were ostensibly engaging with questions of the thirteenth century, their picture of who was a courtier and who was a warrior reflected the realities of their own age, when warriors were indeed triumphant and courtiers had no recourse but to adjust to a world where their values of precedent and propriety counted for little.

Conclusion

In these chapters, I hope I have shown that scholarship on medieval Japan can be enriched by a careful and close investigation of a range of different sources. Instead of rejecting some texts, as recent scholars have done, or drawing from all of them uncritically, as early twentieth-century historians did, historians can benefit from study of historical sources only if they are interpreted carefully and thoughtfully. The benefits of this approach should be substantial for all periods of study, but especially for pre-modern studies, for I believe this methodology of intentionally scrutinizing biases and literary form in sources can be a fruitful way for researchers to overcome the paucity of material that in particular haunts the study of pre-modern history.

Chapter one illustrated the need for this new approach to pre-modern texts in the field of Japanese history. In chapter two, I used the Jōkyū texts as an archive to recapture the positive nature of court-Bakufu cooperation before 1221 and the strong desire for peace in the early Kamakura period. In chapter three I used the different sources to explain Go-Toba's tactics and his defeat; not through overwhelming Bakufu force, but because of the fractured nature of interpersonal loyalty in thirteenth century Japan. Chapter four followed the shock waves as writers struggled to make sense of Go-Toba's failure, resulting in an ability to criticize the emperor as never before. In the final chapter, I used some of the same texts for the unintentional ways they show us the changing perceptions of warriors and courtiers over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth century.

As this dissertation has tried to prove, the strong desire for peace and cooperation between courtiers and warriors, the slow development of their respective cultural identities, the complexity of interpersonal relations in the thirteenth century, and the fragmented nature of

military and political power displayed in 1221 give us cause to reinterpret the significance of the Jōkyū Disturbance. Rather than being the last stand of a doomed court, a massive civil war, or the result of long-simmering enmity between two classes of people, the Jōkyū Disturbance was an unexpected and idiosyncratic fracture that complicated an already dense and convoluted political and cultural landscape. But how does this reassessment change our view of medieval Japan?

First of all, by opening a window into the pre-Jōkyū period, we see that observers of the time did *not* see Yoritomo's foundation of a warrior regime in Kamakura as a revolutionary or even oppositional act in terms of its effect on imperial authority. The focus of writers who lived the "interwar" period was instead on the upheavals of the mid-twelfth century, and how Yoritomo ended this period of unrest. In the current historiographical narrative—which sees the Kamakura period as part of a long process of imperial decline—the significance of this period of peace has been underestimated. The way that courtier and warrior elites struggled to maintain the fragile compromise between the court and Bakufu, and the positive assessment of warriors in much of courtier discourse, paint the early Kamakura period as a unique moment of new possibilities. Seeing this period on its own terms helps us understand how upsetting the Jōkyū Disturbance was at the time. Observers realized the period of genuine cooperation between court and Bakufu had come to a close, and their writings betray shock and apprehension as Japanese society fragmented ever further into a more uncertain and more antagonistic future.

Secondly, a close investigation of how the Disturbance actually occurred showcases the complex world of interpersonal relations and divided loyalties in the thirteenth century. Kamakura Japan may have been characterized by two centers of power, but the loyalties of people at the time were far from being a binary choice between court and Bakufu. Familial ties

were paramount, yet pre-modern families were marked more by division than unity as struggles for inheritance and personal grudges reverberated through every level of society. The way Go-Toba exploited family rifts illustrates the multitude of personal reasons and complex marriage politics that allowed for actors to hitch their successes to drastically different causes. However, his failure to muster a large enough force speaks to the limitations of thirteenth-century loyalty. As the varied responses to the Disturbance attest, observers not only saw the war as a private folly, but even more significantly, betrayed very little reverence for the emperor himself. By judging Go-Toba's actions as those of a fallible human being, the works of medieval writers undermine our assumptions about pre-modern divine kingship and provide surprising points of resonance with studies reinterpreting Japan's imperial mythology in the modern period.

Thirdly, a ground-level view of battles in the Jōkyū Disturbance adds to our understanding of medieval warfare. Scholars in recent decades have used common sense and demographic calculation to question the large size of armies reported in narrative texts, but a close look at these narratives reveals much internal evidence to doubt large troop numbers. Stories like the Battle of Ōi Crossing show booby traps, scouting expeditions, quick retreats and foolhardy one-upmanship, elements that only make sense as part of limited skirmishing at strategic bottlenecks. Unlike the impressive and well-oiled Bakufu machine that dominates historical understanding of Jōkyū, we see instead small forces and semi-autonomous commanders pushing more haphazardly toward their final destination. Numbers that populate all manner of monographs and articles, like the famed 190,000 Bakufu troops, can be re-evaluated by investigating the various texts that produced them in the first place.

Finally, stepping back and surveying the broader changes in representations of courtiers and warriors in the medieval period challenges our understanding of the "rise of the warriors"

that has dominated English and Japanese-language historiography. Initially defined as the brave barbarian “other,” warriors nevertheless betrayed a wide range of behaviors in which long-received warrior traits like loyalty played little role. Though much work has been done on elements of courtier culture in Heian and Kamakura Japan, it is important to remember that courtiers were culturally ill-defined throughout the thirteenth century. As we move from the thirteenth to early fourteenth century, however, a more oppositional relationship between courtiers and warriors turned the notion of being a courtier into a more solidified set of unique characteristics, and what is now our stereotypical understanding of warriors came into view. Moreover, this long process of negotiation of discursive space in early medieval Japan recasts our understanding of warrior power. Rather than see the medieval period in terms of two competing, self-conscious classes of society, noting changes in these categories over time allows us to recognize that the image of powerless courtiers and triumphant warriors is an anachronism from a later age.

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Appendix: Record of the Surprising Events of Six Reigns

In the past I was one who attended court under the glow of the moon of the Chrysanthemum Pavilion, but now, hidden under the clouds of the Lotus Platform, I am one who has rejected the world.¹ I was born during the sagely age of Ōhō (1161-63), and began to serve the court during Takakura's enlightened time. Since then I have grown old, and now more than 60 years have passed. During my life I have seen the court rites revised and changed many times, and seven emperors have taken the throne.

When Emperor Rokujō was on the throne I was very young, but from the Angen era (1175-1177) down until today (1222-1224) I have seen and heard many things—though events have been so bewildering I sometimes wonder if they were all a dream. But once I resolved myself to my vows without hesitation, I changed my appearance and dyed my robes, placing my trust in Amida and my hope in the Pure Land. Since that time I have rejected the things of the world and have long since hidden away all my previous writings.

But then I was shocked out of complacency by the thunder of the storm that hit us so suddenly, plunging the world into darkness.² I began to collect and rewrite all of the scattered bits of information I could still remember about what has happened. My aspirations are to combine the two Buddhist paths,³ comprehend good and evil causation, pass down knowledge from Chinese and Japanese texts, and advise about good and bad government. I want to take some of these examples of good and bad government from recent times, and present them so that later generations of ministers can learn from them. I do not do this for myself; I write these things down for the benefit of the people and the benefit of the realm.

The six reigns:

Emperor Takakura
Emperor Antoku
The Oki Emperor
The Awa Emperor
The Sado Abdicated Emperor

¹ The author contrasts the imperial court at Kyoto (the “Chrysanthemum Pavilion”) with his monastic life (the “Lotus Platform”).

² A reference to the Jōkyū Disturbance of 1221, the author's major motivation for writing his history.

³ Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.

The Current Emperor

Emperor Takakura was the eightieth emperor to reign since Jimmu. He was Go-Shirakawa's second son, and his mother was Kenshumon'in (Taira no Tokinobu's daughter). At age five he was named crown prince, and took to the throne at age eight, but he passed away at the age of twenty. In the twelve years of his reign he accomplished innumerable acts of virtuous government. He resurrected the path of benevolence and righteousness from the Classics that had declined. He resumed the legacy of proper rule and care for the people that had been severed. To us it is regrettable that he was fated for such a short life, but on the other hand he died without having to see the great treachery of the Taira clan. It is truly because of his good fate that the realm was still peaceful at his passing.

Emperor Antoku was the oldest son of Takakura, and his mother was Kenreimon'in (the daughter of Taira Kiyomori). He was given the throne at the age of three, and through the three years of his reign the realm was not peaceful. He drowned in the sea.

Grand Minister Taira Kiyomori was a descendent of Kanmu, and the son of Minister of Justice Tadamori.

Now, back in the first year of Hōgen the Minister of the Left Yorinaga made evil plans with emperor Sutoku and gathered up a rebellious cohort. He threw the realm into disorder and put all in danger throughout the capital.

On the night of the ninth day of the seventh month, retired emperor Sutoku secretly went out of the southern Toba Palace, and hurried to the old palace in the eastern part of the capital. He made his camp there and turned those palace grounds into a battlefield. On the twelfth day, retired emperor Go-Shirakawa sent the imperial army to subdue the rebels. With their forces swelling and their banners waving, the imperial army attacked. In the volley of their arrows, Minister of the Left Yorinaga lost his life.

On the 23rd, emperor Sutoku was exiled to Sanuki. Of his surviving supporters, some were ordered to be taken into custody, while others voluntarily gave themselves over to Go-Shirakawa's royal mercy. Professors of law from the Palace University were ordered to debate the suitable punishments. Thirteen men including General of the Right Bodyguards Fujiwara Kanenaga were banished. After consideration of precedent, twenty men, foremost courtier-without-post Taira Tadamasa [Nagasada], were beheaded. At that time Taira Kiyomori and Minamoto Yoshitomo were given an order from Hosshōji Lord Tadamichi saying that they would

both be given special rewards for their meritorious service. But the order also specified that Yoshitomo should be the one to behead his own father, Police Inspector Tameyoshi. Such royal edicts are unalterable.

Afterwards, in the first year of Eiryaku, 1160, Captain of the Right Guards Nobuyori conferred with Director of the Left Stables Yoshitomo and plotted an uprising. Grand Minister Kiyomori pursued them and executed them, and banished all of their followers. Thus began the fall of the Genji and the triumph of the Taira.

Blessed by courtly favors, Kiyomori ignored courtly regulations. Ten thousand did he subjugate; ten thousand did he aggravate. Finally in the Angen era (1175-77), retired emperor Go-Shirakawa ordered Major Counselor Fujiwara Narichika, Lay Monk Saikō and others to start a rebellion against the Taira. But Tada Yukitsuna discovered the plot because he was a Minamoto Chamberlain, and he reported it to Kiyomori, endangering the state once more. Many courtiers of upper and lower rank were all implicated. Truly the sovereign's power had become weak, and the retired emperor's heart was ill at ease.

Emperor Antoku took the throne on the 24th day of the fourth month of 1180, the fourth year of Jishō. That same year, Lay Monk of the third rank Minamoto Yorimasa responded to the call to arms of Takakura Prince Mochihito against Kiyomori, but on the 26th day of the fifth month he was brought down in Nara. Yorimasa and his retainers from Izu, along with warriors from Watanabe no Tsu, had taken the Uji bridge and come to a halt at Byōdōin. There they were met by an imperial army of several thousand cavalry.⁴ Clashing countless times over that one river separating them, Yorimasa's side fought valiantly, blown by the wind of battle and the volley of arrows, but they were simply outnumbered. Yorimasa and the Prince, along with all of their sons and retainers, were hunted down in the end.

On the first day of the sixth month, Kiyomori moved the capital to Rokuhara in Settsu. However, after the monks of Mt. Hiei had spoken out against this many times, demonstrating principled reasons for their distress, the capital was moved back to Heian castle on the sixth day of the 11th month.

On the sixth day of the twelfth month, there was a great uprising in Nara, and in response

⁴ The author uses what I translate as "imperial army" 官軍 as a purely technical term. As far as I can tell it only refers to an official army controlled by whoever is controlling the court. Thus in the Hōgen Disturbance Go-Shirakawa sends the imperial army to subdue the "rebels," but during the Taira years Kiyomori is in charge of the imperial forces. The ambiguity of who is a rebel and who is a protector of the state is fascinating, especially since the author is very clear about who's side he agrees with, despite who is more legitimate by bureaucratic standards.

the General of Third Rank Taira Shigehira took the imperial army and burned Tōdaiji to the ground.

The first year of Yōwa, 1181.

The Exile of Izu, the late Right Captain of the Guards Minamoto Yoritomo, was a descendant of Emperor Seiwa and the son of Director of the Left Stables Yoshitomo. After conferring with the Genji in the regions of Kai and Shinano, he assembled an uprising against the Taira. Ōba Kagechika was heavily indebted to the Heike for many favors, and so he attacked Yoritomo's force at Ishibashi no Yama. Sasaki Takatsuna and others risked their lives fighting him so that Yoritomo could escape. He fled in a small boat with Doi Sanehira and crossed over toward Awa province, where the Miura warriors came to his defense. Ōba's troops grew as Hatakeyama Shigetada, Inage Shigenari and others joined the ranks. They skirmished with Yoritomo's supporters along the way, until finally Yoritomo's supporters barricaded themselves in the Miura castle. Hatakeyama struck the next day. Fleeing the siege in boats, the Miura warriors all met Yoritomo on the water. They were still grieving their leader, who sacrificed himself so they could escape—he alone had valued righteousness above his own life.⁵ The Miura all joined forces with Chiba Hirotsuna and travelled through the province of Shimotsuke, and by the time they reached the fort at Kamakura in Sagami, the eastern provinces all willingly submitted to Yoritomo's rule.

Yoritomo's uncle Yoshihiro had been harboring his own ambitions for power, and now he assembled Yoritomo's younger brothers Noriyori and Tomoie, as well as Ayama Tomomasa to his side. Yoshihiro sent them to attack Yoritomo, and their forces did battle at the field near the palace in Noke in Shimotsuke. Yoritomo rose up like a violent wind from the southeast, blowing the ashes of the scorched earth. And when his army blew against the great cloud of warriors arising from the northwest, men and horses of the enemy both lost their way. Thus with force of only a thousand or so Yoritomo defeated an army of tens of thousands. This is truly a kind of power given from above.

In antiquity when King Wu was going to attack King Zhou of Yin, the winter sky was cloudy and cold, and the fallen snow was higher than bamboo. A man driving two horses in a five-wheeled chariot came up to King Wu's gate. He said, "This is to aid the king. You must

⁵ Miura Yoshiaki had decided that he alone would stay behind in the castle holding off the enemy so his retainers could all escape, according to *Azuma Kagami*.

attack Zhou,” and then he went away. The horse chariot had left no tracks despite the deep snow. This was because the sea god had sent a heavenly messenger to come to King Wu’s aid, and thus he was able to defeat Zhou of Yin. Also when Han Gaozu had been surrounded by the army of the treacherous Han Xin, and it looked like he was in grave danger, the sky suddenly was covered with fog and grew dark. Because of this Gaozu was able to escape. At times like those heaven revealed its hidden mercy. I wonder if the same is not also true in our time.⁶

The lay monk Grand Minister Kiyomori passed away, but the successor of his house Minister of the Center Shigemori had passed away before his father. So while the world lamented the loss of Shigemori as a wise minister, the Taira clan had also lost its best chance at military strategy.

At that time, when Yoritomo, Yukiie and Kiso Yoshinaka were rallying the rest of the Genji army, ten courtiers of the Taira sent a written appeal to the deity Sannō Gongen at Mt. Hiei, praying for restoration of peace. Though there were ten of them—Minister of the Center Munemori, Azechi Acting Major Counselor Yorimori, Middle Counselor Norimori, Middle Counselor Tomomori, Advisor Tsunemori, Captain of the Right Guards Kiyomune, Middle Captain Third Rank Shigehira, Middle Captain Third Rank Koremori, Functionary Third Rank Michimori, and Middle Captain Third Rank Sukemori—they signed it jointly in one accord, while crying. The appeal went:

In the reign of Emperor Kanmu, Mt. Hiei was where Saikyō first promulgated the Tendai faith and reached enlightenment. Since then the Buddha Law has flourished, and has been the protector of the state. But now, the Genji of the eastern provinces have formed unruly bands, taken public and private estates, and usurped taxes from the land. At the same time the military arts have grown lax and centuries-old traditions will come to an end. If we do not have the aid of the gods and Buddhas now, how can we quell the rebels and prevent them from taking advantage of their victories even further? If you truly consider our ancestors, they should really be called the descendents of Hongan⁷. From now on, much like the Fujiwara have made Kasuga their tutelary diety and Kōfukuji their clan’s temple, we Heike will make Hie shrine our tutelary diety, and Enryakuji our clan temple. What delights your temple gates will be a delight to us; what causes insult to your priesthood will bring insult to our own house. We beg that you gods of the seven shrines of Sannō will show your aid to us. We beg that you

⁶ Implying that Yoritomo’s victory, like those of the past, was aided by heaven because it was a righteous cause.

⁷ A devout Buddhist and grandson of Emperor Kanmu who sponsored many Buddhist works. Since the Taira trace their lineage to Kanmu, they are reminding the gods that they are the descendents of a righteous religious founder..

warriors of the three pagodas of Hie will unite your strength with us.

No one who hears of this matter, whether familiar or strange, kind-hearted or cold, could help having to wring their sleeves of tears.

Yet since the Taira were steeped in the results of evil karma and the bonds of fate fixed in the past, the gods and Buddhas did not accept their fervent prayer. The flower of the spring of Hōgen had fallen in the Autumn of Juei. In the Hachijo Palace and the Rokuhara Court, wild winds raised up dust, and clouds of smoke drew forth their flames. The fleeing Taira pushed their imperial double-bowed boats onto the water, but this was no peaceful procession to a summer palace. The azaleas growing on the rocky shore, were they red because they had shed too many tears? And were the thatched reeds of their boats also drenched with longing for the wooden eaves of home? Sinking in these bitter thoughts like the moon in the rising tide, they knew all too well why the frost-covered reeds fear for the fragility of their existence. The loud cry of a plover from the islets would jolt them again and keep them from sleep. The simple clang of an oar on the steep banks would pierce their hearts with fear. White egrets gathering in the far-off pines looked more like the streaming flags of barbarians, and geese squawking from the distant seas sounded more like the splashing oars of war boats on their path. The salty wind tore at their flesh. Their fine powdered faces now bedraggled, their sunken eyes lost in the dull green waves—it was too hard even to cry at the thought of home.

The capital city where we dwelled

Is now but a different world

The wind from the pines

Blows waves over our sleeves

At that time the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa made a procession in his carriage to Tendai Mountain, and prayed in seclusion at Ishikiyomizu Temple. By this effort he flattened the uprising in the West and secured peace for the capital in the East. Among [?] the great gifts he bestowed was installing Yoritomo as Shogun, and calling out the regency for favor by endowing the imperial family shrine at Hakozaikigu in Chikuzen. In these ways respect and awe towards him increased, and people throughout the countryside could not believe their eyes and ears.

The Oki Retired Emperor Go-Toba was the third son [4th] of Emperor Takakura; his mother was Shichijōin. He acceded after Antoku. He became emperor at the age of four on the 20th day of the eighth month of 1183, the second year of Juei. He reigned for fifteen years.

Though Go-Toba was taught both the cultural arts and military arts, he was negligent in the former and only excelled in the latter. The father of the country is supposed to rule secretly with letters in his left hand and war in his right, and it is distressing if imperial power is lacking one of these virtues. For when the king of Yue was fond of swordsmen, many people were injured throughout the land. When the king of Chu was fond of waiting women, many people at court starved. Even though such injury and hunger are naturally despised in the world, what the leader fancies is what the subordinates follow. I am saddened to think of the state being in this danger.

On the twenty-eighth day of the seventh month, Minamoto Yoshinaka and Yukiie went in to the capital and set themselves up in place of the departed Taira. Yoshinaka had already been the Director of the Right Stables, but also added to himself the position of governor of Iyo. By and by he forgot his sworn duty to fight the enemies of Yoritomo, and more often than not brought about destruction of the city and great distress to the people. Go-Shirakawa should have waited for Yoritomo himself to set the situation right, but instead he acted on the ill-thought advice of his retainers and set forth tens of thousands of men from the imperial troops. They made a stand at Hojūji, but on the 19th day of the 11th month Yoshinaka took his force of only about a thousand men, divided it in three, and surrounded the retired emperor's palace. First he decimated the temple guards. The smoke of Xianyang Palace was before their eyes; the dust of Gusu Pavilion was on their sleeves.⁸ Several thousand monks and laymen, including the Sanjō Prince Enkei and the Abbot Myōun, lost their lives. Blood flowed like a river, and severed heads formed the banks. Why did divine protection not keep these monks from leaving this world? Perhaps it was the violation of taking up arms when such was not their proper trade. Yoshinaka moved Go-Shirakawa to the Rokujo Palace and set him up in house arrest, positioning his vassals to keep guard at the doors and gates.

The era name was changed to Ganreki in the fourth month of 1184.

When Yoritomo heard of the massacre, he rallied his brothers Noriyori and Yoshitsune, along with the Genji throughout the East. On the 19th day of the first month the punitive battle against Yoshinaka began.

On the seventh day of the second month, Yoritomo defeated them at Ichi no Tani in Settsu. He executed several thousand soldiers, but captured Middle Captain third rank Taira Shigehira

⁸ Both are references to a declining dynasty in Chinese history. The Xianyang Palace was burned down by Xiang Yu during the fall of the Qin, and Gusu Pavilion was the last haven of Fuchai, the last king of Wu.

alive. Shigehira was transported from the capital to Nara, and Yoritomo had him executed there. This was because Shigehira had burned Todaiji to the ground the previous year. All of Shigehira's belongings were confiscated and made into a donation.⁹ When his widow tried to melt down his gold and copper to add to the mold of the Great Buddha, the metal would not meld at all with the original casting, or so I am told.¹⁰

Is it the dark smoke he raised at Todaiji

That still blocks him from salvation?

The bell toll that wakes us all

Does not rouse him

The second year of Bunji, 1185.

On the 24th day of the third month, faltering and weakened, the Taira came to their end at Moji Pass. Lay monk Grand Minister Kiyomori's widow Tokiko held the son of heaven in her arms and jumped into the great deep. Veteran generals were captured by the Genji army of tens of thousands. Antoku's mother Kenreimon'in and the consorts were led by barbarian hands back to their home. Minister of the Center Munemori was captured alive and taken off in the trailing clouds to the east. But then Yoritomo sent him back to Awazu in Ōmi, and his head was shown off in the capital.

Did he ever think

That once the capital flower was scattered

It would be the winds of Shiga bay

That would blow him away?

After calming the stormy waves in the western sea and bending down the obstinate trees in Ōshu,¹¹ Barbarian Subduing General second rank Yoritomo put on a fine brocade robe and made a procession to the capital. Passing over the ranks of Middle and Major Counselor, he was directly appointed General of the Guards. The service commemorating his appointment was a rare and splendid sight indeed. Yoritomo promoted the Buddha Law with his patronage and

⁹ Yoritomo intentionally moves Shigehira's place of execution to Nara as a symbolic retribution for his destruction of Nara's most important Buddhist institution, and furthermore makes his belongings a donation to the temple. Here the author takes care to point out Yoritomo's thoughtfulness and political acumen.

¹⁰ Shigehira's offence cannot be undone by simply donating his precious metals to add to the Buddha: his impure metals mysteriously will not even mix with the metal of the Buddha.

¹¹ The western sea waves refers poetically to the Taira, and the trees of Ōshu refers to the Ōshu Fujiwara who resisted his rule in the northeast.

maintained the Way of Kingship with his support and obedience to the throne. He resisted extravagance in his own clan and soothed the worries of tens of thousands. He demoted the disloyal and promoted men of service. He showed absolutely no favoritism and did not treat people based on their kinship or closeness to him.

The third year of Kenkyū, 1192.

On the 10th day of the third month, the retired emperor passed away. In his late years he was blessed with good fortune. Go-Shirakawa had accumulated much merit through Buddhist rites for longevity and undoing past karma, along with pilgrimages to Mt. Kōya and Hiei, and many other esteemed places. He never tired of making processions to rare and miraculous temples and shrines. At Enryakuji he received the Mahayana canon; at Miidera he learned the Esoteric teachings. At Todaiji he visited the remains of what emperor Shomu had once built, and painted with his own hand the eyes of a statue of the Buddha. Yoshinaka had rebelled against imperial favor, but the wind had blown him away like summer leaves. The Taira had caused havoc at court, but they had dissipated like foam on the waves.

Even so, fate came like a fog in Autumn, and sickness invaded his body, until the wind of impermanence in Spring beckoned the final flower. At the end the Pure Land was his only goal day and night, and to the last he never wavered in the *nembutsu*. It was only that final night that the sound of his yogi bell faltered, and by morning his voice was reciting the scriptures no more. The skies darkened, and to the ends of the realm the land was overgrown. Trees and plants already have a depressed hue, but how much more are the pines at the grave of Emperor Mu? Birds already cry with such sadness, but how much more do the geese at Dongting lake? People of Go-Shirakawa's palace took their clothes already dyed with the color of cherry blossoms for spring, and they changed them all to robes of wisteria—that dangling plant, waiting to bloom in the fourth month—somber lavender for mourning. The blessings of Go-Shirakawa's merciful compassion had raised up all throughout the land; his justice and benevolence had flowed beyond the four seas.

Even now when I think

Of his reign, unfazed by the winds

I can still recall his face

*The moon sinking in springtime*¹²

¹² Go-Shirakawa's reign is not blown by the winds, in other words a reign of righteousness and integrity. The moon

On the thirteenth day of the first month of 1199, the ninth year of Kenkyū, Shogun Yoritomo, Former Captain of the Right Guards, passed away. His oldest son Captain of the Left Guards Yoriie took over his position as the Tiger Fang General. In the military arts, he surpassed even his ancestors in his abilities, and in archery he never missed a target. Yet Yoriie got involved with dangerous and rebellious men. There was a warrior named Kajiwaru Kagetoki who was extremely powerful and exceedingly arrogant. Kagetoki was betrayed by Secretary Hiki Yoshikazu and hundreds of others, and so Yoriie executed Kagetoki's entire family. He also acted on the slander of others and had his own uncle, the Zen monk Ano Zenjō, executed.¹³ But the principles of karma are simple, and the suffering of others that Yoriie had caused rose like smoke and made him ill. When he collapsed with a fever and took holy orders, his maternal father-in-law the Tōtomi governor Hōjō Tokimasa raised an army of several thousand. Tokimasa defeated the army supporting Yoriie's heir Ichiman, including Hiki Yoshikazu, Kasahara Chikakage and Kasuya Arisue.¹⁴ Tokimasa then brought up Yoriie's younger brother Minamoto Sanetomo and made a proclamation that Sanetomo should be Shogun. Subsequently Yoriie was put into confinement in the mountains of Izu.

The Awa Retired Emperor Tsuchimikado was the Oki Retired Emperor Go-Toba's oldest son, and his mother was Shōmeimon'in. He took the throne on the third day of the third month of Kenkyū 9, at the age of 4. In the approximately twelve years of his reign, there were no strange portents in the land and skies, and the rainy season did not fail.¹⁵ The state was well-governed and the people were prosperous. However, the senior retired emperor, Go-Toba, was powerful and did as he pleased. He prided himself in his pleasures and forgot his obligation to care for the people. Some of his retainers and serving women strongly cautioned him, but to no avail. Go-Toba could no longer tell right from wrong, so even though Tsuchimikado's proper

sinking in springtime refers to Go-Shirakawa's death, which happened in spring; the direction of the west is also an allusion to reaching the Pure Land.

¹³ The main point here is that Yoriie is not a good leader because he acts rashly on the slander of his retainers—the implication of the author is that many of the people he executed were probably innocent.

¹⁴ Hiki Yoshikazu was Yoriie's father-in-law and husband of his wetnurse. For the sake of his own influence he is adamant about his grandson Ichiman, Yoriie's son, becoming the next Shogun. Arisue and Chikakage? are his sons-in-law. Their plans for Ichiman would mean that Tokimasa and the Hōjō would lose their place as the maternal relatives of the Shogun.

¹⁵ Unusual phenomenae in nature, like earthquakes, comets and other heavenly omens, and disruptions in the seasonal cycle were considered indications of political misrule, and so Tsuchimikado's reign has none of these bad omens.

time had not yet come, he was forced to step down. The autumn winds through the reed palace were chilly; the moon over the thorny mountain was sad and lonely.¹⁶

The first year of Kennin, 1201.

On the night of the 23rd day of the first month, the emperor Tsuchimikado made a procession to Go-Toba's Nijō palace. At that time the former Taira vassal from Echigo Jō Nagamochi and his cohorts stormed the warrior Secretary Oyama Tomomasa's residence, and then marched to the retired emperor's palace asking for a proclamation that the Eastern barbarian warriors should be hunted down. When he was denied imperial permission, Nagamochi escaped like lightning; he tried to put a curse on his enemies but ended up being executed.

On the seventh day of the ninth month of 1203, the third year of Kennin, Sanetomo was appointed Barbarian Subduing General. His rank was increased to fifth rank lower.

An armed conflict occurred between the Tendai student-monks and the monk-workers. On the 15th day of the 15th month, Sanetomo sent the imperial army to bring down the rebellion and three hundred strong men were captured. On the 17th the monk-workers were disbanded.

After Sanetomo had married the daughter of Minister of the Center Nobukiyo, the Ōmi Shugo Hōjō Tokimasa made his own plans. First he decided that Yoriie and his cohort in Izu would finally be executed. Next he attacked Hatakeyama Shigetada and Lay Monk Inage Shigenari. Once word got out that Tokimasa was advocating that Right Guard Vice-Director Hiraga Tomomasa should be made Shogun, the Sagami Shugo Lord Yoshitoki and Director of the Palace Kitchen Lord Ōe Hiromoto took Shogun Sanetomo into protection and decided their next move.¹⁷ On the sixth day of the seventh month, they ordered Tomomasa to be executed.

On the seventh day of the third month in 1206, the first year of Ken'ei, the Regent Grand Councilor Yoshitsune died suddenly. He was called the second Lord of Kyōgoku. His talents surpassed all others; his policies comforted the people. He investigated the full breadth of many paths of learning, and he understood the impermanence of life. He aided all the affairs of state and did not show favoritism to anyone.

The blossoms sprinkled with dew

¹⁶ These are images of overgrown palaces, the first referring to Emperor Yao, and the second to Han Wudi.

¹⁷ Tokimasa is trying to supplant his first wife's family with relatives of his second wife, Maki no Kata, who had evidently gained a great deal of influence. Shigetada and Shigenari are sons-in-law by his first wife and Tomomasa is a son-in-law by his second wife. The children of Tokimasa's first family (including Yoshitoki, Masako, and Tokifusa) and their supporter Hiromoto rightly see this as a threat to their own position, and push their father into early retirement after having Tomomasa executed.

*Still bloom as of old
Our old house still in disrepair
But the master is not at home.*

The scent of the flowers at Kanaya, the glow of the moon over the southern tower... I change out my sleeves longing for the friend I once used to see. I put my bed together and hold back my grief for the person to whom I once gazed. Spring goes and autumn comes, but I mark the years in vain. Isn't it just the pain of pointless memories? Even though death is the road we must all travel, the former Great Abbot Jien did not take Yoshitsune's death well. He was troubled day after day, repeating that he suspected foul play. If he had not already been convinced that this kind of tragedy was going to occur, then he would have had at least some consolation in the fact that death is a normal part of this world. Grieving that the court Chamberlains and Council of State were now without guidance, and the realm of literature and poetry had lost its leader, Jien wrote:

*Friends of the moon
And the autumn night wind
Have now lost their way
On the spring mountain path*

When Jien composed this poem, the Senior Retired Emperor Go-Toba responded:

*I wonder if you believe
That I, too, was his friend
If only I could show on my sleeves
This grief I bear*

Death is indeed a road we must all travel. Even Arhats trained in the three enlightenments and the six powers cannot avoid it; even Bodhisattvas taking the form of this world cannot escape from it. Even so, the sadness that comes with the cycle of impermanence can be beyond all reason.

The Sado Abdicated Emperor Juntoku was the second son of the Oki Emperor Go-Toba, and his mother was Shumeimon'in. He was designated crown prince at age four, but took the throne at age fourteen. His reign lasted eleven years.

One of the Shogun's vassals, Captain of the Left Guards Wada Yoshimori, bore a grudge against his master. On the second day of the fifth month of 1213, the first year of Kenpō, he rode

into the Shogun's estate and started a battle that lasted several days. The warriors that filled the fields were many thousand, but in the end Wada was brought down.

On the third day of the eighth month, there was a territory dispute between Mt. Hiei and Kiyomizu Temple, and about three hundred warrior monks from Mt. Hiei went down and gathered at Chōrakuji. In response [Go-Toba] sent out a mass of warriors from his private Western Guards, and they ended up killing ten men, with around thirty more being captured.

Two or three priests from Kiyomizu moved one of their temples too close to a branch temple of Enryakuji, and so on the twentieth day of the tenth month messengers from Enryakuji trespassed into Kiyomizu. In retaliation the warrior monks of Nara set out from Kōfukuji and went to the capital, aiming to burn down Enryakuji. At that point [Go-Toba] sent the imperial army to defend Mt. Hiei, and finally on the twentieth of the next month the Nara monks went back across the Uji River and returned home.

On the 27th day of the first month of 1219, the first year of Jokyu, the Minister of the Right and Captain of the Left Guards Shogun Minamoto Sanetomo passed away. Sanetomo had learned the achievements of Laozu and acquired the military strategy of Duke Huang Shi. In the sixteen years he exercised power, Sanetomo had nurtured kindness like the spring dew that waters the grass, and punished rebelliousness as if sending down frost in summer. He considered his bedclothes as nothing more than simple coverings against the harsh dawn winds; he promoted frugal people and demoted the extravagant.

However, near the end of his life as his fated time approached, Sanetomo became unprincipled and forgot his compassion toward the people. In his travels he had servants designated from all the districts along the way, and he wore out the people in surrounding villages by the expenses he required. He took on additional favors as Middle Captain of the Left Guards when he was already a Middle Counselor. He would not even listen to requests from anyone unless they were sons of high-ranking officials. It had not been long since his previous advancement before he joined the ranks of the triumvirate as Minister of the Right.

When the time came for his appointment ceremony at Hachiman shrine in Kamakura, he surrounded himself with a veritable wall of soldiers protecting him and leading him in an ox-cart. After all the men of high rank had assembled they began the procession to the pine mountains of Kamakura, and they walked up the plum peaks adorned with the scent of courtier perfumes. Sanetomo wore robes of fine brocade, ignoring the color prohibitions of his rank, and he had on

ornaments of fine metals and precious stones that fairly glowed. His ceremony looked grander even than that of a regent, and I wondered whether I was not really seeing the procession of the Emperor.¹⁸ After the lighting of the torches at dusk, the ceremonial offering of silk was completed. The party was returning from the shrine when, suddenly, a strange-looking bandit appeared and slashed at the master, attacking like lightning and escaping again like a whirlwind. Professor of Letters Minamoto Nakaakira and the Inaba Former Shiken were also killed by the assassin's blade. Everyone from the highest rank to the lowest was in a panic trying to flee from harm, shaking dust off of their hats and throwing off their outer robes, crawling to safety.

A search party of soldiers set out to find the murderer, riding to shrine after shrine in a mad commotion. The man who was next in line as Shogun finally discovered the villain.¹⁹ When they asked him the name of the conspirator, he revealed that it was none other than the Zen monk Kugyō, the orphan of Sanetomo's brother Yoriie. Masako had long worried about Kugyō's welfare, which is why she originally made him the director of Hachiman shrine. Later he had shut himself up in a temple vigil for a thousand days, praying with gut-wrenching devotion and sincerity and spilling some of his own blood on the stone slab. Even though Kugyō knew that his actions would result in his own death, perhaps he still resented that the strong warrior ability of his family had come to an end with Sanetomo's pretensions.²⁰

If we look at ancient times, Duke Cao Cao was so vigilant that despite great headaches he never took off his helmet, even when dictating letters to Chen Lin. Shouldn't Sanetomo have learned from the actions of such brave generals of the past? When Sanetomo first left his home there was a dove flying around, and when he got out of his ox-cart at the shrine he struck the great ceremonial sword and accidentally broke it. These were omens of warning from his Minamoto ancestors. In the past Lin Jiang was travelling a great distance when one day the axles of his carriage broke. When he received warnings about this from an old man, Lin stubbornly ignored them and died soon after, never to return from his trip. Remembering the things of the past is the key to instructing future generations.

¹⁸ Though this passage bears similarity to the author's glowing description of Yoritomo's ceremony, references to Sanetomo overstepping his rank and indulging in extravagance lend more of a critical tone: the author's comment that it looked like an Imperial procession is, I think, nothing short of satirical.

¹⁹ Possibly an epithet for Miura Yoshimura, who turned Kugyō in to the bakufu.

²⁰ "Pretensions" is my own addition, but only to clarify that it was Sanetomo's un-warrior-like behavior that ended the warrior legacy, not his death.

After Sanetomo's death about a hundred warriors left the world to join the priesthood. Among them were Former Acting Junior Assistant of Civil Affairs Ōe Chikahiro, who was Director of the Palace Kitchen Lord Hiromoto's oldest son, and Acting Deputy of Dewa Adachi Kagemori, who had served all three of the Minamoto Shoguns and was a man well-versed in the military and cultural arts. Everyone suspected that these two still bore grudges about what had happened, and even though they supposedly abandoned the concerns of this world they seemed to nurse their resentment all the more.²¹ Not only warriors, but outcasts and droves of the poor, people both young and old all became monks. Fathers and sons, or brothers together would leave their families; servants and vassals would take the tonsure just the same along with their masters. I have no way of knowing all the different reasons that motivated these people to join the priesthood. But the family of Acting Master of the Right Capital and Shugo of Mutsu Hōjō Yoshitoki were resolute in wishing to uphold the legacy of the former Shogun. Not a single Hōjō had any desire to leave their family. How they must have grieved over the shock of Sanetomo's sudden death! Though this life is but a butterfly dream of an existence, he still should have had some seventy times left to see the spring.²²

As I walk outside I know

This house will soon be without its master

Even so, plum trees by the eaves—

Do not forget to bloom in spring!

This is what Sanetomo once wrote, trying to restrain his emotions. Did he correctly see that his own death was near?

From foreign lands to our own court, there have been endless examples of wise and enlightened ministers who gave themselves over to be killed. It is said that the Great Enlightened Buddha in his previous life as a bodhisattva did not try to avoid the lash. The power of Buddhas to manifest themselves, bodhisattvas leading us through expedient means—these things cannot be talked about in the same way for those of us still in attachments.

The youth Ano Tokimoto, from Suruga, decided that there was a need for someone to fill

²¹ Chikahiro would end up siding with Go-Toba against the Bakufu in the Jōkyū Disturbance, and Adachi Kagemori would fight for the Bakufu.

²² There is a famous episode in Zhuangzi where Zhuangzi cannot tell after his dream whether he was Zhuangzi dreaming he was a butterfly, or is now the butterfly dreaming he is Zhuangzi. The story became an allegory for the ephemeral nature of life.

the post of Shogun, so he assembled a group of supporters around himself.²³ Hōjō Lord Yoshitoki rallied the warriors of that province and surrounded Ano's castle, bringing down the rebellion. Ano's siblings were attacked along with him, and all of his beloved children were killed. The mother of the Minister of the Right, the widow Second Rank Nun Hōjō Masako, recommended to the court that the next Shogun should be the grandson of the second Lord of Kyōgoku, Kugyō Yoritsune, the youngest member of the Minister of the Right's family. She wanted to make sure the branch of the family that provided the first three Shoguns would not end in vain.²⁴

On the third day of the seventh month Palace Shugo Acting (provisional) Director of the Bureau of Horses of the Right Minamoto Yorimochi was brought down. He was a descendant of Minamoto Yorimasa, the man who had once written:

No one knows how well the mountain guard

Has defended the lofty palace

Yet he is still hidden by the trees

Will he ever see the moon of the court?

After Yorimasa had written this, he was finally allowed to approach the throne. I wonder if Yorimochi's actions were stemming from the same dissatisfaction as his grandfather's. Around this time Yorimochi was chosen to be one of Go-Toba's private Western guards. He and many others like him prided themselves on military achievements when they had none, accumulating court ranks and indulging constantly in food and drink, singing in the morning and dancing at night. In all their daily thoughts each of them had only one desire: Oh, if only I could ride out in battle ahead of all the other warriors! They bent their hats in the warrior fashion but tied their belts with the seals of court. Then they rode out to the imperial residence and waged battle. Yorimochi set the palace on fire, and countless treasures rare to be found in the world were reduced to cinders.

Some decades ago, wise ministers anticipated the latter days of decline and moved the emperor to a fine secondary palace, so for a while there was no imperial presence at the original palace. Unfortunately, over the course of thirty years the original land became deserted fields for livestock, and the palace stones were all plowed into the earth. At the bureau where yin-yang

²³ Tokimoto was the son of one of Yoritomo's younger brothers, and the last proper member of the Minamoto clan.

²⁴ Kujō Yoritsune was the grandson of Yoritomo's niece, thus distantly related to the Minamoto.

experts once interpreted the stars, actual clouds could be seen through the rafters; at the garden of the Divine Spring where prayers for rain are made, the place where deer rested was now overgrown. People tried to rebuild the venerable palace, but no one among them is still around today. Once we reached Juntoku's 84th reign in our age of decline, the palace gates for a second time had fallen into ruins. In the end, not only did the palace remains become a battlefield, but every single temple and shrine was completely lost to the flames. It is because the power of the gods and Buddhas had declined over time that such a thing could have happened. The loss of the palace was even more distressing. Not so very long ago, our ministers had required so much blood and sweat of the people to rebuild its red eaves, making the palace even more beautiful than it was before. And then, thanks to a single small torch setting it on fire a single time, human destructive power rivaled the disasters of nature. King Yao threaded together grasses to keep out the rain and built up the earth to block the wind, and he continued to rule the land for ninety-eight years, even after he had lived for a hundred years—which is according to the principle [of virtuous rulers having long reigns].

People with discernment were just learning to handle their grief about these things, when the reign was suddenly passed from Juntoku to Chūkyō on the twentieth day of the fourth month of Jōkyū 3, 1221.

On the fifteenth day of the fifth month, the Senior Retired Emperor Go-Toba, in the same spirit of the ancient Tenpyō rebellion of An Lushan, raised an army and attacked Left Capital Police Inspector Iga Mitsusue. Then he sent out messengers with his order of condemnation against Hojo Yoshitoki. When this happened, the Second Rank Nun Masako called together all the powerful warriors to the garden and spoke to them:

“Every heart should listen as one; these are my last words. The late Shogun Yoritomo followed in the footsteps of his ancestors the Iyo Lay Monk Yoriyoshi and Hachiman Taro Yoshiie and took care of the eastern warriors. He eased the burdens of your fields and guaranteed your desired posts and ranks. Your obligations to him are already higher than Mount Sumeru, and your gratitude should be deeper than the ocean. Throughout the rule of four shoguns we have not had the slightest blemish of a mistake, and we have caused no injury to the authority of the court. But in denial of Heaven's punishments, disloyal ministers have prided themselves in unrighteous military pursuits and sent down this edit to capture Yoshitoki. Won't you consider this: they will kill all of our men and make all our women their slaves; shrines and temples will become dust and ash, and the estates of great generals will be plowed into fields; the Buddhist Law will be destroyed midway

through its journey east! Those who understand their obligations and treasure their names, capture Hideyasu and Taneyoshi, to preserve your families and to make names for yourselves.”

When they heard these words, they could make no other reply than the tears that choked them. They only wanted to give their unimportant lives as payment for their heavy obligations, without a second thought.

As the warriors each left the meeting they asked themselves, “Why would Hachiman Bodhisattva not lead us who are so blameless? We must raise our whips and set out in the morning.” They departed only one day later. Even if the road home was not far, they paid it no mind—they did not even take the time to go see their hunched-over, aging mothers or their young newborn children. They set out in the night on a thousand-mile path through the mountains and rivers. They climbed over tall peaks and crossed rapid streams, moving faster even than Fan Kuei entering the Hong gates or Ren Gui plowing through the Ji forest. The imperial army, however, was like leaves and grass blown in the autumn wind, more fragile than a withering leaf in the winter frost.

In the past the Empress Tai Zhi was the consort of Han Gaozu, but she outlived Gaozu and ruled the land herself. Then the Heavenly Empress Wu was the consort of Tang Taizong, and she also outlived the emperor and ruled the land herself. At our own court, Jingu was the consort of the emperor Chūai. She, too, outlived the emperor and ruled the land herself. She raised up an army on her own and subjugated other countries, gaining the whole realm. In reality these emperors Chūai, Jingu, and Ōjin were manifestations of the three Bodhisattvas, secretly the form of the jeweled body. They preserve the gods through their ancestral shrine of Hachiman, and protect the sincere by the kings of the four seas. So, then, the widow Masako who followed her husband Yoritomo’s deepest vow so seriously and conformed herself to the wishes of Hachiman, had taken the form of a woman to rule the realm. Surely she could not be a mere mortal.

At dawn on the eighth day of the sixth month, the Kasuya Left Guard Lieutenant Hisasue and the Chikugo Left Guard Lieutenant Arinaga, each bearing wounds, returned to the capital from Su no Mata. They told everyone what had happened: a cloud of warriors had swarmed the mountains and fields, leaving the imperial army terrified and unable to endure the fighting, and they had been defeated on the sixth day. Greatly agitated by the news, Go-Toba took the other retired emperors with him and hurried from the Rokujō Palace, going to the house of the priest

Sonchō near the banks at Oshikōji. There the nobles and courtiers donned their armor and raised their flags. These men had all the appearance of normal warriors, but how could they know the way of battle? They truly looked pitiful. When Go-Toba finally made his procession to the foot of Mt. Hiei in eastern Sakamoto, his assembled warriors barely numbered one thousand. People of every rank in the capital were in shock and confusion, not sure whether they even wanted to go on living. But perhaps out of a concern to protect the Buddha Law there at Sannō, his retinue returned on the tenth day and Go-Toba resided again at the capital.

Fighting began on the thirteenth, and on the fourteenth the eastern warriors crossed the Uji River into Maki no Shima. Many soldiers of the imperial army got lost and died trying to escape. Those who had earlier gained fame as Go-Toba's soldiers, including Ōuchi Korenobu and Gojō Arinori, all set fire to their houses. The city glowed faintly, overhung with the hue of smoke. Brave people and cowards alike did not know where to go. There are many bewildering things this world must endure, but it seemed that even the conflagration in the days of King Xiang could not compare to this night.²⁵

On the fifteenth, a million warriors entered the capital, filling the central and outer capital provinces. Anyone who fled the battlefield was searched out and found, and their heads were cut off—there was no pausing to wipe the blades clean. Horses and humans, both dead and wounded, littered the streets, making it difficult to walk. In the towns and villages there was no house left unscathed, in the fields there were no crops left. The western and northern guards that once took pride in courtly favor and enjoyed the thrill of battle were destroyed in an instant; all the advisors and trusted aides that had built up merit with Go-Toba were caught.

Major Counselor Bomon Tadanobu, Inspector Fujiwara Mitsuchika, Middle Counselor Fujiwara Muneyuki, Second Rank Captain of the Watch Minamoto Arimasa, Consultant Captain Fujiwara Norishige and Consultant Captain Minister Ichijō Nobuyoshi now had to go on a strange journey they never could have wished for, captives on the road to the east. Whether they hurried ahead or lagged behind, they knew the end of the road was the same. They went through the old Ashigara Pass—or was it just a doomed river dam?—for nothing could hold back their flood of tears, and in sadness as they reached Narumi their only thought echoed, “What will become of me?”²⁶

²⁵ Another reference to Xiang Yu burning the Xianyang palace during the fall of Qin.

²⁶ A beautiful line of wordplay and imagery that are at best incompletely rendered into English (in fact,

Minister Tadanobu remembered how this whole road had been lined with horses on the way to Sanetomo's appointment ceremony as Minister of the Right, and then he thought of the sad return back, his sleeves wet from tears. And today there would be no drying them at all, he thought as he kept walking in grief, not knowing that his sister, the nun widow of Sanetomo, had been negotiating on his behalf for pardon. Because of her efforts, when they reached Hamana bridge, Tadanobu alone was allowed to turn back to the capital.

Minister Mitsuchika could no longer bear the thought that his life was like the dew newly formed on the drooping leaves of clover, about to be blown by the relentless early autumn winds of Susono. He let his hair down disheveled like the wormwood, and prayed only for the Lotus of the Pure Land. He met his death still reading the Lotus Sutra.

Minister Muneyuki heard that his final day had arrived as he reached the fields of Ukishima, and he wrote:

At the Chrysanthemum Waters in Nanyang Province of old

A drink from the stream would add many years

But now at the Chrysanthemum River on the Tokaido

I lodge at its western bank only to lose my life

Before today is through

I hear it has been fixed

On this island of sorrows

I reach the end of the road

Thinking something might happen to anything he wrote by hand, he went into a house by the side of the road and carved these words onto a pillar. He went on to a place called Aizawa; there he heard the falling dew from the overgrown trees merging with the sound of the cicadas.²⁷

Minister Arimasa was also executed around this time. Minister Norishige was one who never should have scattered from the crowd back to the flower capital. He should have made a

grammatically speaking, these two paragraphs are technically one long, florid sentence). Ashigara no Seki (pass) can also mean "dam of bad things" and nicely complements the image of not being able to hold back tears. "Narumi" can be a place name as well as the phrase I render "become of me."

²⁷ Both images of the ephemeral, and meant to imply Muneyuki's own death indirectly. As in all of these cases of courtiers being taken to the east, they are executed at different places and different times, yet the author never mentions any actual eastern warriors ordering the executions. The author gives no clear answer about how much freedom the captives were given and how many soldiers accompanied them. Compare this obliqueness with *Azuma Kagami*, which specifically mentions which warriors were sent as escorts to each captive.

proper stand at the battle at Uji River, but he fled in vain, only to end up drowning himself in the bottom of the river Hayakawa.²⁸ I find it so meaningless. Minister Nobuyoshi met his end at a place called Tōyama in Mino province.

On the sixth day of the seventh month, Senior Retired Emperor Go-Toba was moved back to his Toba Palace surrounded by barbarian warriors with flags streaming, blocking the road with no hope of escape. He came out of the Yotsutsuji Palace accompanied only by the Ōmiya Middle Counselor Saionji Saneuji, the Left Consultant Captain Fujiwara Nobunari?, and Lieutenant of the Left Palace Guards Fujiwara Yoshimochi. I can only guess what he was feeling. Far away he could see his mother Shichijōin's palace, and despite the distance he kept looking back toward it. Even the eaves of the Imperial Palace were hidden; all Go-Toba could see was his old Toba Palace—the building now covered with dust, the garden now only occupied by warriors.

On the eighth day, Go-Toba took the tonsure. Even though there was no silk curtain placed in their way, the ladies-in-waiting were never able to see his appearance before he left this world—he was guarded by a large army from which not even a bird could have escaped. All the ministers and consorts who had served at the jade steps could not even hear his gentle voice. Go-Toba ordered Nobuzane to paint his portrait, but when he looked at the image it only reminded him of how much longer he had to go on living, and he was filled with regret. Shichijōin, who had reached the limit of her emotions, came to see her son. Warriors blocked her entrance, but she placated them one to the next and made it through to Go-Toba. However, they both were at a loss for words and could only cry. Since they were both blinded by their tears, Shichijōin put her arms on the ladies-in-waiting and had them guide her feet, and finally she was able to go back. Surely to endure something like that and still go on living sets a noble example, as anyone with discernment would agree.

On the 13th day they moved Go-Toba to the province of Oki, with a contingent of warriors who accompanied his palanquin and went along the road ahead. The sinking moon filled Go-Toba with regret about all he was leaving behind. None of the people ahead of him on the road, regardless of whether they had been favored by the court or shut out of it, could look back at him without crying. Though the past is gradually disappearing as if dusted with snow,

²⁸ Norishige, along with Arimasa, were Go-Toba's head generals, so the author condemns Norishige for not living up to his duty to fight to the death.

you still might ask where there are old precedents for such a procession. In fact, setting out from the Toba area was the established route for warriors to head west, so Go-Toba was copying the example of the warriors at last! What one desires will not end up in vain.²⁹ And as if to further live up to this lesson Go-Toba got to go on the road he had always enjoyed taking toward Minase Palace, but still encircled by soldiers he saw the place growing farther and farther away. I found it regrettable that he often let himself follow those unwholesome desires. He passed by the Minase River, and though it was not spring the foot of the mountains was covered in mist. There was no end to the sadness that weighed on his mind like the autumn. We should feel sympathy for him, that in the Minase Palace grounds the willows had become withered—but even the willows at the Sui Dynasty canal had been endless, he must have thought sadly, filled with bitterness for his own lost country.

Passing Koya in Settsu just reminded him of the narrowness of a small hut, and at Mikage he wished he, like his appearance, could remain where he was, but all these thoughts were pointless.³⁰ As they walked Go-Toba could see in the distance the Sutra Island, a wise barrier against the waves that had been built, it was said, by the Lay Monk Grand Minister Kiyomori and Commissioner of Civil Affairs Shigeyoshi. That island had saved the lives of many people, and he had heard talk that it would be praised forever. But even Go-Toba's own temple Saishōshi Tennōji had already collapsed into disrepair because of the demon Tenma; he must have found it so upsetting. Mountain after mountain, river after river, they went along the road. They stopped at a place called Ōhama in Izumo, and since the boatmen had to wait for the right winds to set sail, they rested under the pines throughout the night. Waking upon an unfamiliar bed of dew only reminded Go-Toba of the depths of his fate, and he could not even prepare himself for the bitter end of the road. Realizing that the Toba Palace had been the last time he would ever see his mother's face, he was stricken with grief:

My poor mother still waits for me

If only I could visit her

Before the wind blows away

²⁹ The author sarcastically criticizes Go-Toba for indulging in military arts, and thus getting what he wished for by replicating a warrior-like westward expedition.

³⁰ Like the road to execution of the courtiers, each place Go-Toba sees reminds him in some way of his fate. Koya can also mean small hut, like the shabby dwellings he has to look forward to in Oki. Mikage can also mean "his majesty's appearance."

This dew-like existence

Immersed in the sound of the wind and waves, his heart had no respite from grief and he could only think of things far away, writing:

Do you know how

My sleeves look, wrung out

From crying out like the plovers

On this bay of sorrow

After calling for Go-Toba's boat which they had hidden, the warriors left to go back to the capital. Since they had escorted him from the palace in the south of the capital all the way to this resting place by the sea, Go-Toba had gotten used to their company. When he expressed his fondness for them, even the stalwart barbarian warriors felt some compassion, and it was hard for both parties to control their emotions as they parted. The distant waves were like clouds rising in a smoky haze, as Go-Toba crossed the sea to offshore Oki and landed there. If they had been in the southern regions, then he could have sent a word with the migrating geese back to those in the capital, but there was no such hope. And since he had paid no heed to the warnings of yin and yang in matters of government, it was hard to imagine being restored to favor—that would be like waiting for a raven's head to turn white.

Like the clouds silently sinking into the sea, Go-Toba's eyes were in a daze of tears as he looked for home, staring at the mountains from where he had come. The way the thin blue-green lines of the peaks reminded him of painted eyebrows only brought up painful memories. Mornings were spent in anxiety; nights were filled with sadness. Once he had moved into his new mountain residence, he would often look around from place to place, and keep himself occupied with the signs of each coming season, and all manner of thoughts, and though he was accomplished at various types of song and verse, composing waka poetry was work at which he excelled. Once he had loved to see the flowers blooming in the foggy air of his immortal palace; now before the waves on this distant isle, he could barely remember what it was like in that faraway place. Now, the game of kemari has very few instances either in the past or present. But after its origins by the Yellow Emperor, it became prevalent under spring skies at the Shirakawa Palace. It was popular at court (during Go-Toba's time) for thirty-nine years, but starting with Go-Toba's rebellion [his interest in] it declined, and his sights were set on the 49 vows of Amida and acceptance in the Pure Land by the three Bodhisattvas.

*Though he never spoke of the Pure Land
 Before coming to this island
 He asks now if there is a chance
 The pine winds will bring purple clouds his way*³¹

On the 20th day of the seventh month, they sent the Newly Retired Emperor Juntoku to the province of Sado. He set out in the dark of night with only two consorts and two noblemen accompanying him. Deep in his heart he thought of his mother Shumeimon'in, his empress, the first-rank princess Shunkamon'in, and his former crown prince Chūkyō; he could not hold back his tears. Lesser Captain Kazan'in Nobutsune began suffering an illness, and he ended up turning back. Though they went on for many days, the image of the capital still stayed with them. They made it as far as Echigo province, but Second of the Watch also became gravely ill, and he succumbed to his sickness there at the bay. Even though Juntoku knew how treacherous the path would be by boat, he alone had the conviction to row across. Once he had made it across the bay, he was envious of the fast first geese of autumn, riding the winds from the north back to the capital. He wrote a letter for the geese to carry with them. Juntoku called the servant men who had been carrying his palanquin, and he was going to order them all to return home. But looking at the harsh place before their eyes—an island like floating seaweed on the water—he thought, “How would they even make it back?” and he was not able to finish his request. I imagine the tears he shed were bitter indeed.

On the 24th day, they sent the Rokujo Prince Masanari to the province of Tajima. On the 25th, they sent the Reizei Prince Yorihiro to Bizen province.³²

On the tenth day of the intercalary tenth month, they sent the Middle Retired Emperor Tsuchimikado to Tosa, but would later end up taking him across to Awa province. He kept hearing that today would be the day to move, but by early winter he still had not been transferred to Awa. He was beginning to bear the situation, all things considered, when he was finally taken there—so now, would the circumstances be the same?

[When he was first exiled] his retinue of four consorts, Lesser Captain Masatomo, and Chamberlain Toshihira all readied their travel clothes, while his mother Shōmeimon'in had no will to go on. The first winter rains had just begun to fall there at the immortal palace, and their

³¹ Purple clouds are an image associated with rebirth in the Pure Land.

³² Both sons of Go-Toba.

eyes, too, had become misty. At the sound of the rooster announcing dawn, the Tsuchimikado Major Counselor Sadamichi brought Tsuchimikado the imperial palanquin, and there was nothing that sovereign and minister alike could do but cry. He got into this new palanquin from the rear, and kept looking around the whole journey. Passing by Suma, Akashi Pass, the bells of Onoe; spending the night in a strange place, the sound of deer braying and the chirping of insects—everything around him sapped him of all strength. The branches of the mountain trees and the grasses of the field were dead and withered by wintry frost, but it was the dew of autumn that lingered on his sleeves. They made their lodgings at a place called Muro. As it happened, this was a place where Go-Toba had passed on his way to Oki, and now Tsuchimikado understood all too well how his father had longed for home. He called for his boat, the white waves trailed in the wake of its oars, past islands and bays. The wind that rustled the green pines looked red with the leaves, but could it just be the rain of tears that fell on his sleeves? Tsuchimikado rode by Yashima and Matsuyama, where the Taira and Hogen rebellions had ended in a clamor.³³ But as the days passed, he found himself envious even of Antoku's misery, and Sutoku's reputation must still be better than his, he thought miserably. When he got out of the boat he looked back the way he had come, and wondered if the smoke from the salt fires would be travelling back to the capital, and if the torches of the fishermen might really be flames burning in his own chest—he could not bear his own thoughts. The mountains were covered deep in snow, and birds could not even be heard when he arrived at his destination.

Now, the son of heaven and his descendants had all been sent far away, and other relations were put into confinement in the capital. They all found this painful, but especially so for Juntoku deep in the snowy north mountains and Tsuchimikado on the waves of the southern sea. Instead of kingfisher curtains and red bedchambers, they had small clay rooms with blinds made of reeds. The smoke of fine incense had been replaced by reeds burning for warmth in their shabby huts. Back in the Seiryō and the Shishin golden palaces, everyone used to watch the flowers and gaze at the moon up in the clouds of court. Of course they would put on a performance of the Song of Rainbow Skirts and Feathered Robes, and listen to the dragon flutes and phoenix pipes every night.³⁴ The three ministers and the courtiers all followed the correct

³³ Yashima was where the Taira made their final flight into Dannoura, and Matsuyama was where Emperor Sutoku was exiled following the Hogen Disturbance.

³⁴ This sentence quotes from Bai Juyi's *Song of Everlasting Regret* about court before the An Lushan rebellion.

rites, and the women in their peppered chambers wearing twill and silk engaged in graceful conversation. They would not forget those days. When they went on processions, their attendants took the imperial sword and jewel in front, and the regent would process alone, followed by the Left and Right Captains, and a hundred ministers both martial and civilians forming the line. The palanquin of the phoenix carriage would be brought out accompanied with music and voices ringing out in a solemn display. How Juntoku and Tsuchimikado must have reminisced.

For these people who were disappearing like the dew on the leaves, the sadness of things was like young grasses overgrown, nourished only by tears. The grief of the women left behind was heavy, but knowing that they should not completely give up, they did not entertain thoughts of joining the monastic life in the mountains, but simply lost themselves in memories of old times at the capital. Among them Shumeimon'in was exhausted by melancholy. She barely went on living her dew-like existence only out of concern the seventh obligation, the one of duty to her lord. With no way to hear ever again his imperial words from the wind off of the Bramble mountains, the mere presence of his old pillow and night-quilt, left behind for no purpose, made her upset and confused, and she would talk [to herself] all day. When the sun reached its height all of the mementos he had left her troubled her spirit. She went to look at the spring flowers in the immortal palace, but they did not have the scent they did when they had seen them arm-in-arm with Go-Toba. She listened to the autumn insects chirping in the garden, but it was different from the cacophony they had heard with their pillows side by side.

As the morning sun rose up on that solitary isle, Go-Toba longed for the clouds in the Eastern sky, and when the moon was sinking at dawn, he shed tears to mingle into the waves of the Western sea. Throughout the five phases of decline in heaven and the eight sufferings of humanity, joy will cease and sadness will come; things will flourish and then deteriorate. Though the imperial body will change and turn to dirt, will Go-Toba's resentment linger on and cause problems?

A person of our times might doubt the situation and say:

"Our country has always been a land of the gods. Human kings who take the throne are actually heavenly descendents of the great deity Amaterasu. So how could there be such a disgrace as three emperors all being sent into exile at once?

"Well, what grows into a Mandarin orange in Huainan will become a trifoliate orange if

you transplant it to Huaibei.³⁵ In the past as well as now, our Yi and Di barbarians facing the west have been strong and those trying to punish the east have been weak. Not only that, but for whatever reason there seem to be very few ministers in our own land who take their reputations seriously and repay their duties and obligations. When Ji Xin took Han Gaozu's place in battle and rode his master's chariot so that Gaozu could escape, the enemy Xiang Yu praised his loyalty and wanted to make Ji one of his own generals. Ji replied, 'A loyal minister does not serve two masters; a brave warrior uses no words of flattery. You should submit to Han.' Xiang got angry, tied him up and burned him to death.

"Now Go-Toba's minister Norishige looked down on even the powerful Yang Guozhong, and his ranks rose to Left Middle Captain and Consultant. Fujiwara Hideyasu rose in rank, rewards and status, and he became wealthy beyond compare. They took the seals of authority they had from many different provinces and became the driving force behind the order of attack on Yoshitoki.³⁶ But these men are like those who courageously drive a chariot but then jump out of it, or fight a battle but keep looking back toward home.³⁷ The Assistant Commander of the Gate Watch Fujiwara Tomotoshi had come from the academy of the Northern branch of the Fujiwara, and yet even he did not hesitate to give his life in battle against the armies of the east. Yet again, Emperor Yuan of Han kept many different kinds of animals that he petted and cared for in his garden, when one day a bear got angry and charged toward him. Yuan's consort Feng disregarded her own life and threw herself down between them, and then his generals came from both sides and killed the bear, as the story goes. This woman had such an upright and strong heart, so how could strong warriors like Hideyasu and Norishige not even be able to handle the ways of battle?"

But a person of discernment replies:

"The disloyalty of ministers is certainly a disgrace to the state, but the length of an imperial reign depends without fail on whether the governance was good or bad. Emperor Xianzong had compassion about the expenses of the people, and for five years he made no trips

³⁵ A Chinese proverb originally from *Yanzi Chunqiu* illustrating the influence of situation and context on a person or group's development, though Yuge points out the author is drawing more directly from *Mogyū Waka*.

³⁶ Norishige and Hideyasu were Go-Toba's head generals in the Jōkyū Disturbance. The "person of our times" is laying all of the blame for the outcome of the Jōkyū Disturbance on these "disloyal," i.e. cowardly and unrighteous, ministers below Go-Toba.

³⁷ Both of them had fled the scene of battle rather than fight to the death.

even close to the Lishan Palace. On the other hand, Emperor Xuanzong remained ignorant of the resentment of the people until all of heaven was thrown into disorder, and he had to wander around in the austerity of the mountains of Shu. *The Model Emperor* says there are two pillars of a leader's power: Men of knowledge and caring for the people. 'Men of knowledge' means that peace throughout the land cannot be achieved by the strategies of just one person. Having a sovereign without a minister is something condemned in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. 'Caring for the people' means that the people are the body of the sovereign. When that body is hurting, can the emperor be in full health? Who was it that picked off the brambles out in the fields to survive? All of the work that is done, even intricate work that makes people wipe off their sweat out under the sun, is all done for the sovereign. Therefore, King Wuding of Yin made a minister his rudder and navigated the waves of the four seas; Tang Taizong treated people like a mirror and illuminated countless dark places; Yu of the Xia continued with the plans of Gao Yuo who had served the previous emperor; King Wen of Zhou followed the ideas of Lü Shang [Jiang Ziya].

"Whenever evil rulers are in charge of the state, they prize flatterers and demote the wise. Consequently, governance is no longer in line with precedent, and the winds blow down the branches and the falling rain washes away the earth; dancing women corrupt the state from the inside, and the barbarians Chao Cao warned about grow strong on the outside; within the four seas finances are exhausted, and the realm is no longer peaceful. The evidence for when an enlightened ruler has governed the state is this: in the other land, if they have wanted to follow the ways of Yao of the Tang and Shun of the Yu; in our own court, if they continued the customs of the Tentoku and Shrōyaku eras, appointed people after investigating their merit (?), and reduced the obligations of the people when they were afflicted with floods or droughts, never failing to protect the realm so that everything was peaceful."

Now even though this person of discernment would never be able to do what those leaders did in the past, he is like the maid of Lu who bemoaned that the king was hunched and weak while the prince was still too young. In the sixty years of his life, sovereigns who valued civil affairs and military affairs equally have been rare. Each time that the way of government has fallen into error and confusion, his body has been ill at ease and his heart has been pained. Because of this, he has only one wish: that the sovereign can be happy and take care of his people.